U* 8. 160

A Discovery of GLORIOUS LOVE

OR

The Love of Christ to Beleevers. Opened

In the { *Truth*, *Transcendency*, and *Sweetnesse*, } thereof,

Together with the *necessity* that lyes upon every Beleever, to *strive* after the Spirituall and Experimentall knowledge of it.

Being the sum of VI Sermons Preached upon *Ephesians* 3.19.

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By JOHN DURANT, *Preacher of the Gospel in the City of* Canterbury.

נזכירה דדיך מיין —— i.e.

Wee will make thy love to be remembred more than wine, Cant. 1. 4.

חביאני אל־בית היין ודגלו עלי אהבה i.e.

He brought me into the house of wine, & his banner over me was love, Cant 2. 4.

London Printed for *R. I.* to be sold by *W. Gilbertson* at the Bible in Guilt-spur-street without *New-gate*. 1655.

To the Right Honourable *Robert* Earl of *Warwick*, &c.

My Noble Lord,

I *Presume your Lordſhip well knows, that* Chriſts love is our ſoul (*and therefore* ſole) life: *Then* (*and indeed not till then*) *do wee live, when wee injoy divine love: Our boſomes cannot* breath forth the breath of life, *before Chriſt* breaths in the breath of love.

Indeed, its the miſery of moſt, *that they are* ſtrangers *to this* truth. *To ſpeak to many of* the Lord Jeſus; *and to tell them* of a life in love, above what ſence feels, and of a comfort, a glory, a happineſſe flowing from thence, far ſurmounting what ſight ſees, *is a* myſtery, *which they cannot* perceive (*nor indeed* beleeve) *for tis* fooliſhneſſe *unto them. Not onely the* News-mongers *at* Athens *counted*

this News *which they never heard of; But even the* Philosophers *there themselves accounted* Pauls *preaching of these things a* strange doctrine.

But I hope I may without either falseneſſe *or* flattery *say: your Honour is well acquainted with these things. As* experimentally knowing, *that all your* honour, joy, felicity, *lyes in this, that you know* the love of Christ passing knowledge.

And this is one ground *of this dedication of these ensuing Sermons; But its not the* onely ground. *For,*

I desire by this also to declare to the world, and your self, how sensible and mindfull I am of those obligations, which your Honour hath laid upon mee, *not onely by your* owning of, *and* respect unto my person, *but* (*which I prize most*) *my* Ministry.

His person is above my praise, whose pen *hath* blotted *the common way of* dedications. *But his ground was, because for the most part they only* flatter. *And yet hee allows of dedications,* when the argument of the Book

Quia laudatur a laudatore viro est laus vera.

Book agrees with the person whom its dedicated to. *The consideration of which I hope (as hath been hinted) will secure mee from his, or others censure.*

Sir Francis Bacon de augment. scien. lib. 1. page. 19.

Besides, I know, there is a difference between flattery, *and* gratitude; *though the one bee odious, as a* vice; *yet the other is amiable, as a* vertue: *And tis at this which I have aimed in this dedication.*

I know that the bare remembrance *(how gratefull soever) of favours received, is no* requital. *But yet, though it serves not to* remunerate the favour, *yet 'twill to* vindicate the benefactor, *that hee hath not* ill bestowed his benefits.

My Lord, *If I say that I cannot* requite *all your favours*, its no more than all know: *And if I say, that Christ can, its no more than I know* you beleeve, and I desire. *Twill bee no* over-exalting of Christs love, *nor any* diminution unto your favours; *If I say, that the* least grain of love from Christ *to you, will abundantly compensate* all the weight of your

love to mee. *And this* (My Lord) *is not onely my* prayer, *but my* belief *in your behalf.*

I shall not trouble your Lordship *with many words. Onely let mee have leave to sound in your ears, two words of the Lord* Jesus; *the one was a word of* Prophecie, *the other of* Advice.

1. *His word of* Prophecie *was,*
Mat. 24. 12. The love of many shall wax cold. *Its your* duty to search, *and twill bee your* honour to find, *that there is* no fulfilling of that in your soul. *But alas! who can say, that hee sees not too great a fulfilling of this in himself! Oh! the decay* of love, zeal, activity, appearance, &c. *in the things of Christ that is every where! Its a thing that calls for* bloody tears; *that besides the* abounding of iniquity *in enemies, there is such* waxing cold of love *in friends. I have sometimes*
Phil. 3. 18. *thought Christ spake this* Prophecie (*as* Paul *did his rehearsall, viz.*) *weeping.*

II. *Christs word of advice was this,* Strengthen the things that remain, that

that are ready to dye. *Its* well *that* under ſpirituall decayes wee have any thing that remains (happy they who have not loſt all.) *Its* wiſdome to ſtrengthen that which languiſheth; (holy they that ſtrive to do thus:) and the following Sermons may bee helpfull herein. If the Spirit lay this truth upon our hearts, That Chriſt loves us with a tranſcendent love; 'twill at once make us bleed for coolings, and burn (yea blaze) a freſh with the fire (internally) and flames (externally) of love to Chriſt, his people, his truths, his deſignes, &c. Apoc. 3. 2.

But I have gone beyond my intentions, though I hope not beyond your acceptation. If you will permit mee to adde, that I am in the number of thoſe, who both praiſe, and pray for you, and profeſſe to bee much obliged to you. I ſhall trouble you no further, ſave with the ſincere ſubſcription, that I am, My Lord.

Your Honours ſingularly obliged
Soules ſervant.

JOHN DURANT.

To his beloved friends,

the godly Inhabitants of the *Town and Port* of *Sandwich*. Particularly

The Congregation over which the Holy Ghost hath made my reverend Brother (*Mr.* Francis Prentice) *Overseer.*

Beloved in Christ,

HOwever those *who are in the world*, may account the insuing Sermons *riddles*, and *paradoxes*: yet to you (whom I hope Christ hath *taken out of the world*) they are *experienced truths*. Its true, yee know them already (for I have *preached* them to you.) But that you might haye them in remembrance; I have been willing to *Print* them for you; And yet not for you only, but for as many as beleive in the Lord Jesus.

It

It was *Peters* care to perpetuate thoſe things by writing, which hee had *preached* by *word*: That ſo albeit his hearers knew, yet they might bee *eſtabliſhed* * *in the truth*. Certainly next to the *knowing* of truths, is the *eſtabliſhment* in them, which ſome wanting, are gone aſide after airy vanities.

* στηριγμένους *i.e.* rooted or ſetled as upon a firm foundation.

Tis true; your *eſtabliſhment primarily, and cauſally* depends on the *Spirit*. But yet ſecondarily, *and inſtrumentally*, it is attained unto by the *word*. For therefore it was that *Peter* writ (as hee ſayes 2 *Pet.* 1. 12.) and ſurely his writings were *words*. And yet the words of Chriſt were not bare letter: No, they were *Spirit* and *Life*. And the truths of Chriſt held forth by any, *according to the meaſure of the gift received*, are as truly Chriſts words *now*, as when hee was here on earth: elſe how could *Paul* ſay? that Chriſt *came and preached to the Epheſians*, and was *evidently crucified before the Galatians* (as tis *Eph.* 2.17. and *Gal.* 3.1;) neither of whom

John. 6.63.

κατ' ὀφθαλμούς, *i.e.* according to the eies ſight.

whom heard of Christ, till after his ascension. I hope it will bee no *pride* but *a gratefull and necessary witnesse to the grace of Christ*, if I say I have both spoke and writ the *truth, as it is in Jesus*, and *as the Spirit hath given utterance*. Yea and that in a measure also I can say, that *those things which I have heard, and seen, I have declared unto you, that your joy might bee full*.

I know nothing so directly tending to both the *truth, and fulnesse of a Saints* joy (of which I account my self obliged to bee a helper) as the knowledge of the love of Christ. Now this is the subject I treat of. And this I desire to put you in remembrance of, as knowing nothing more strong, and *constraining* unto duty, than *joy springing* forth of this *well of salvation*.

2 Cor. 1. ult.

2 Cor. 5. 14.

I shall not trouble you with a large Epistle. Four words only in this *publick view* (for so is printing) I shall leave with you, as my witnesse *unto Christ* in some *present truths* now

now denied) which I desire may never bee a *witnesse against you.*

1. That *Jesus whom wee preach, and whose love wee declare, is the same Christ still: i.e.* the same God in mans nature (which is the choyce thing in him capable of being anoynted, and so of making him Christ) *hee that ascended is the same that descended, and hee that descended, is the same also that ascended* (as tis Eph. 4. 9, 10.) Hee still retains the *human nature* which once hee took: and so is still not only the same *God*, but *man*. Its true the manhood or *flesh* of Christ is now *glorified*, but tis not *annihilated*, his *body* is made *glorious*, but still tis in *body*. The *man* is set down on the right hand of God, Heb. 10. 12.

αὐτὸς i.e. the self same, not another.

2. This *Jesus shall come again in the same manner in which hee did ascend*, as hee was *visible* (even to the eyes of the flesh) when hee went away, *so shall hee bee seen in like manner* comming again, Act. 1. 10. 11. Hee is not so swallowed *up in Spirit*, as

ὃν τρόπον.

as that hee is *gone out of the flesh*. But albeit his *all* and *onely* presence bee *now in Spirit*; yet hee shall come again, and all *eyes shall see him*: and *they also who pierced him*; *and all kindreds of the earth*, as it is *Apoc.* 1.7. Whoever shall say these Scriptures are not to bee taken in the *letter* (I know I *have the mind of Christ*, if I say in this) hee hath not the *Spirit*.

3. That *till this comming again, wee are to wait for him, and upon him in the spiritual, and yet external observation of the Ordinances of the Gospel*. And in them wee are to expect, and shall find, the sweet and spiritual incomes of himself, in discoveries of that love of which I treat.

4 That *in the day of Christs comming again, those Ministers will bee found blessed, who as faithfull and wise Stewards shal be found giving the household their portion of meat in due season*. And these Saints will be blamelesse, who in that day shall bee found *exercised* in, and yet *living above* the observation *of preaching*, *fellowship*, *prayers*, and *breaking of bread*, which

Lu. 12.42.

Christ

Christ hath commanded to bee kept up til hee come.

And now (beloved) what is the *panting of my Spirit*, both for *my* own *soul*, for *yours*, and for all the *Saints*? Is it not this? that the *morning of that day would dawn*? Is it not, that the *shaddows would fly away, and that the day spring from on high*, might again (in the glory of Christ (God and man,) *visit us*? Surely these are the daily *groanings of the Spirit* in mee: But with these there is also a mixture of *sighs*: oh! that the Spirit would make us diligent, *that wee may bee found of him in peace, without spot, and blamelesse*: and oh! that we may *bee counted worthy to escape all these things which* (in part are already) *come to passe*: and *to stand before the son of man*, yea, and oh! that *when the Lord shall call us to an account, concerning the oracles, the ordinances which he hath committed to us: wee may be found* First, *neither as having defiled them with our own inventions*: Nor Secondly, *as dis-esteeming them upon pretence*

Christ is ἀστὴρ λαμπρὸς, i.e. the day dawning: and φωσφόρος, i.e. the light bringer, and he is also the morning star. 2 Pet. 3. 14.

Rom. 7. 3. ἐπιτρέπω παρ. i.e. to commit as a choice treasure.

tence of our attainments: No nor thirdly to have made them our rest and confidence. But I shal *sigh* the rest in *secret*, I beseech you beleeve that my *heart underwrites* this, that I am

Yours, intirely affectionate in the love and labour of the Gospell.

JOHN DURANT.

A word to the Reader.

IN *theſe Sermons I preſume thou wilt perceive the* plainneſſe of man; *and my prayer is, that thou mayeſt likewiſe perceive the* power of the Spirit.

The time of their preaching, *was (ſome eleven years ſince) even the* noon of the day of Englands trouble; *At that time they were accounted ſeaſonable.*

The matter of them, *is ſome* Goſpell light, of the glorious love of Chriſt, *and this makes mee think they can never bee unſeaſonable.*

The manner of their delivery, *was (as it ought to bee) not with* enticeing words of mans wiſdome. *But in* the ſimplicity & plainneſs of the Goſpel.

The end was, and is, *next to Chriſts glory, thy good (O beleever!) who ever thou art, and if this bee not attained,* I *muſt cry out,* I have laboured in vain! *And*

Two

Two requests I have unto thee,
The first is, that thou charitably cover the failings of the Preacher. *Remember the* heavenly treasure *of the Gospel, is in* earthen vessels.

The second is; that thou carefully correct the Errata's of the Printer, *which by reason of my absence from the Presse could not bee avoided.*

If to these two thou wilt over and above adde thy prayers for mee, *that I may still bee* inabled from an experimental knowledge of Gospel truths so publish the same unto poor souls; *Thou wilt doe more than* requite *mee for my pains in this, even* oblige *mee to a publication of some other Papers. In hope whereof, I subscribe my self,*

Thine in the sincerity and
strength of Gospel-love.

John Durant.

SER-

SERMON I.

EPHES. 3. *ver.* 19.
And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

KNowledge *is the perfection of the Rational Creature:* It is that whereby we come τῶν Θεοῦ μετέχειν (as the Philosopher speaks) *i. e.* to partake of Divinity, to be like unto the Deity. *God is Light*, and Knowledge, and the more we partake of it, the more like wee are to him. Now *by how much the likelier wee are unto God, by so much the nearer we come up to perfection.* Note.

Knowledge is exceeding precious: It must needs be so, sith it tends to perfection. Indeed, as *Aquinas* saith of seeing, *Though the object of sight be mean in it self, yet the very act of seeing is sweet*: So also hee determines of Knowing, that however the object be low and poor, yet the very act it self of knowledge, is high and precious.

Now of *all knowledge there is none so precious, nor so perfecting, as that which is Divine.* Other Knowledge (*viz. Human*) can make us perfect only as *men*: This knowledge (*viz. Divine*) gives us a perfection as Saints. But,

Of all Divine knowledge, the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the light of love, as most precious, as tending most to the perfection of our souls: As ther are degrees of lustre in the heavenly lights; so there are degrees of glory in Divine truths. Every Star in the Firmament hath a glorious light; but yet the light of the Sun exceeds them all in glory: And every truth

(which

(which is as a *Starre in the heaven of Divinity*) hath a peculiar excellency in it, and the knowledge thereof is precious: But Jesus Christ (who is as the *Sunne in Divinity's heaven*) hath a transcendent excellency in him; and to know him, doth farre more tend to the perfecting of our souls, than the knowledge of any, or all Divine truths else besides. Therefore it is that *Paul* accents this knowledge with an *excellency*, Phil. 3. 8. *Yea doubtlesse* (saith he) *I count all things but losse, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* And certainly *Paul* might well say thus: for albeit he had attained the knowledge of other things, yet without this, he had been at a losse in point of Soul-sacred perfection. So that however other knowledge (as being some way perfecting and precious) be desirable; yet there is no knowledge which is so to be desired (at least by Saints) as the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

But yet, as although the *Sun* be the most glorious of the *heavenly Lights*, yet Mortals receive more comfort by its *heat*, than by its *light* : In like manner, though the knowledge of Jesus Christ bee the most transcendent of divine truths, yet our souls receive more sweetnesse by the *warmth of his love*, than by the *lustre of his light*. Look as *Moses* could not see the *glory of God and live*, and yet must *dye except he saw his grace* : Even so our souls cannot see the *lustre of the bright beams of Christs glory, and live* (wee must dye ere we can behold that) yet notwithstanding we must *see the light of the bosome-love of Jesus, or else we dye*. If this light dawn not upon our bosoms, if this knowledge shine not into our hearts, we shall sink and dye in our souls, especially if wee are in fear of any troubles.

Hence it was, that the Apostle *Paul*, among the rest of those precious Petitions, which he puts up to the

the *Father of our Lord Jesus*, in the behalf of the *Ephesians*, lest they should *faint at his tribulations*, hee adds this, that they might know *the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*.

I shal briefly give you the *context*, that it may give some light to the *text*.

The Apostle having hinted in the first verse of this Chapter, that hee was a prisoner of *Jesus Christ* for the *Ephesians*, who were *Gentiles*; and having also upon that spoken something of the excellency of the *Gospel*, and the *warrant* which hee had to preach the same unto them (which two things were as two great supporters of him in his sufferings) hee comes in the fourteenth verse to pray for the *Ephesians*, that they might not *faint at his tribulations*. Now there might be a double ground of the Apostles fear, why the *Ephesians* might faint at news of his tribulations. Context.

1 *Sympathy*. It is usual with

Saints to sympathize each with other in their tribulations. And *Paul* upon this ground, might rightly think, that the tidings of his imprisonment would be sad to these *Ephesians*; and happily he might fear, that out of their tender love, both to his person, and preaching, they would be over-sad, by sympathy, to understand, that now their Preacher was in prison.

2 *Fear lest themselves might meet with the like sufferings.* For what might they think? Is *Paul* in prison for *Preaching the Gospel*? then sure may we fear the like for *receiving the Gospel*.

Note. It is commonly seen, that the *receivers of Gospel-truths suffer as well as the revealers*. And certainly (the *Ephesians* might say) we shall be accounted as faulty for our faith in, as *Paul* is for his Preaching of the Gospel. This peradventure they might argue, and fear, and faint; Therefore the Apostle bendeth his knees to him who alone is able to keep from,

from, and ſupport in faintings, *i. e. To the Father of our Lord Jeſus*: And three things he beggeth in the behalf of the *Epheſians*, that they might not (upon any ground) faint at his tribulations.

1 *Divine ſtrength.* That he would grant according to the riches of his glory, *that they might be ſtrengthned with might by his Spirit, in the inner man*, ver. 16. *The ſpirit of man* (the Apoſtle knew was weak, and ſo would faint, unleſs God did ſtrengthen it; therefore he begs the *Spirit of God* (which is the *power from on high*) for their ſtrengthening in the inner man, that they might not faint in their outward man.

2 *Chriſts inhabitation.* That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, ſaith he, *v.* 17. *If any thing will keep up the heart from fainting, it is the indwelling of Chriſt with the ſoul.* Chriſts preſence creates comfort, and there is no ſuch fence againſt fainting under any fears, as Chriſt in the ſoul. The inhabitation of Chriſt Note.

within, will support the soul from its faintings at tribulation for Christ without.

3 *The knowledge of Christs love*: That they might know *the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*, as it is in the text. *Paul* well knew the power of Christs love, and the efficacy thereof this way. So that now you may gather up the Apostles Petitions into one Prayer, and you may conceive him pouring out his heart after this manner:

'*Thou Father of our Lord Jesus, sith thou art the God of all comforts, and comfortest thine in all their tribulations, so that they faint not; vouchsafe to grant according to the riches of thy grace, that the* Ephesians *may not faint at my tribulations. And to this end, strengthen them by thy Spirit of power in their inner man; fill them by the glorious presence of Christ dwelling in them; but above all, let them know the love of Jesus Christ which passeth knowledge.*

Thus you see by the *Context*, the drift

drift and ſcope of the *Text*. But before I ſpeak any further to it, I muſt clear one thing, which happily may be an occaſion of doubt, and that is the *ſeeming unreaſonableneſſe of this part of* Pauls *prayer*: For may ſome ſay, what reaſon is there that *Paul* ſhould pray for that, which he hints is impoſſible? Why ſhould he pray that the *Epheſians* might know that, which he expreſly ſaith was above knowledge? *The love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge.* Doubt.

There bee three things which may ſatisfie this ſcruple, and demonſtrate the reaſonableneſſe of this requeſt. Satisfacti-on.

1 Admit the love of Chriſt be above knowledge, yet 'tis not unreaſonable to deſire to know it. For look, *as albeit the fulfilling of Divine precepts be above our power, yet notwithſtanding it is to be in our endeavour. In like manner, albeit the knowledge of Chriſt, of Chriſts love, though its above our intellectuals, yet it may bee in*

in our desires, The same infiniteness, which Grace puts in the Will, making it endeavour to fulfill that, which it cannot; nay, yea and doth also put on the desire for the obtaining of that which cannot be obtained. But,

2 To know the love of Christ may be said to be above knowledge with reference to men, as men; not unto Saints, as such. Indeed the *spirit of man* is not able to know, or search into the love of Christ (that is above its knowledge:) But the *Spirit of Christ* is able both to search into, and to reveal his love. And though *Christians as men*, cannot attain to the knowledge of the love of Christ, by the *light of reason*, yet as *Saints* by the *light of faith* they may; especially the *Holy Ghost* (in the mean time) *shedding it abroad in their hearts*, as it is, *Rom.* 5. 5.

3 The love of Christ may be said to be above knowledge, *in regard of its perfection of degrees, not simply in regard of its parts.*

'Tis

'Tis true, the perfect knowledge of Christs love passeth the understanding of men, and Angels (which is its glory:) But yet in *some measure* it may be known (the which is our duty.) For that which cannot bee known *perfectly* (in the highest degree) may yet be known *partially*, (and in some measure.)

Thus the Text may bee cleared from the doubt propounded. Now there are four ways in which I shall look upon this Scripture, and so speak unto it.

Division of the word.

1 *As it includes the truth and reality of Christs love to the Saints.*

2 *As it concludes the height, and royalty, or transcendency of that love.*

3 *As it holds out the Apostles desire, that the* Ephesians *might know both.*

4 *As it contains the ground of keeping up the* Ephesians *hearts from fainting at* Pauls *tribulations*; which is the drift and scope that *Paul* drives, or aimes at in them.

And thus there will be four Doctrines

ctrines which I shall take up, and speak unto from these words.

Doctrines from the words.

I. *There is love in Christs bosome towards all beleevers.*

II. *That love which Christ beareth to beleevers, is a transcendent love.*

III. *It is a thing of necessary concernment for every Christian to know the transcendent love of Christ.*

IV. *The Spiritual knowledge of the transcendent love of Christ towards Beleevers, is of special efficacy to keep up ther hearts from fainting under any trouble.*

I begin with the first, which however it might more fully be gathered from another Text, yet because it will be a good foundation for the following Discourse, and is clear enough in this place, I shall briefly speak unto it now, *viz.*

There is love in Christs bosome towards all Beleevers.

I suppose it is clearly (couched at least) in these words; *Science* supposes *ens*; *Paul* would not doubtlesse pray that the *Ephesians* might know that

that which was not; things must be, ere they can be known.

Nothing falls under the understanding, till it first bee in being.

I shall briefly open the Point, and then prove it, and apply it. Point opened.

How love may be said to be in Christ (as any other affection) I shall not need to inquire; though happily love may bee said to be in Christ as God (for as hee is man there is no doubt of it) in far more proper sense, then any other passion may, because it is (as it were) his essence, *God being* (as *John* saith) *love*, 1 Joh. 4. 16. How love may be said to be in Christ.

What the love of Christ is, I shall not curiously define. The *Morallists* have so many *definitions* of love, that indeed it is hard among them (as the Proverb) is, *to finde this wood for trees*, i. e. to know what *love* is, among their various definitions thereof. Passing by therefore their nicities, I shall content my self with this What Christs love is.

this plain description of love.

Love described.

It is the commanding affection of the Soul, consisting in the expansion or going out of the heart, towards a person or thing, in wishings and workings for its good.

Cunctorum; Deum primum quæsivit amorem.

I call it an *affection*, and the *commanding one* : it being indeed on all hands assented unto. Love is *Queen regent in the Soul*, and it sits upon the Throne commanding all. It is the *Centurion* in the bosome, and hath the same power over all the affections, which the *Centurion* hath over all his servants.

I say, it consists in the *expansion or stretching out of the heart*. Look, as hatred contracts and gathers in, so love opens and dilates the heart. I adde, that it consists (in the general) in *wishings and workings for good*. I do not specifie the end, for that describes, and denominates the particular kinds of love; therefore only in the general, I say, it consists in the going out of the heart, in wishing and working for the

the good of the person, or thing loved.

So that now, when I say that there is love in Christs bosome towards all beleevers, I mean, that *the commanding affections of Jesus Christ is set upon them; that his heart is open, and stretched out unto them; and that the wishings and workings of his Soul are towards them for good.*

Beleevers who they are, described.

By Beleevers, in a word, I understand all those *who close with Christ as tendred in the Gospel.* However there be difference between them in the *degrees of their faith*, & the *ways of their light*, yet all agreeing in this, that they see themselves lost without Christ, and that God the Father doth freely tender him in the word of grace; they do thereupon go out in the strength and sincerity of their souls, to imbrace him as hee is tendred: They are beleevers all of them; and in this thing Christ puts no difference (as it is *Act.* 15. 9.) between them, but burns in his bosome with real love towards them all.

For

Point proved. For *proof*, I should but *darken* the point, if I should bring all that *cloud of witnesses*, which would gladly come and set seal to this sweet truth. Ask *John*, and he will witness that Christ *loved him*. He was indeed a *bosome-beloved Beleever*; and of him it is often said, he was *the Disciple whom Jesus loved*: yea and *John* will witness for more than himself, He saith Jesus loved him, and all Beleevers besides him: For speaking to them he saith, *He* (i. e. Christ) *hath loved us*, Apoc. 1. 5. Call in *Paul*, and he will prove that Christ loveth Beleevers; for Christ *loved him*; and such was the love that Christ bare to *Paul*, that he professeth that he could, nay, did live upon it. *I live* (saith he) *by the Son of God who loveth me*, Gal. 2. 20. Nay *Paul* further *bears record* to this truth, and witnesseth, that Christs love stretcheth forth it self to every beleeving Soul, *We are* (saith he) *more than conquerers, through him that loveth us*, Rom. 8. 37. I shal adde no more

Joh. 13. 23 & 19. 26

more testimonies to prove this truth. Even the least Beleever, though but a *babe*, is able to lisp in the language of this love, and tell you, that there is a divine fire of love in Christs bosome, burning brightly towards Beleevers.

I shall hint three Demonstrations of the Doctrin taken from the behaviour of Christ towards Beleevers, which will evidently clear cordial love unto them.

Christs love demonstrated

1 *Christs eye is always on Beleevers*; and he takes delight to look there where they are. The eye is the Index of love. It is a sweet starre alway shining over the hearts and houses of those whom we love. The Proverb tells us, *where we love, there we look*. Now it is easie to observe the *rowlings of Christs eyes*: how that still they are towards Beleevers. Will you listen to Christs love in its language this way? *Let me see thy countenance* (saith he to the Beleever) *for it is lovely*, Cant. 2. 14. Such is the pleasure that Christ takes in beholding

Oculus amoris index.

Ubi amor, ibi oculus.

מַרְאֶיךָ

i.e. Thy appearance.

holding of beleevers, that he seems to live upon their looks, and speaks as it hee were ravished with their sight. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes*, Cant. 4. 9. He speaks once and again (as it he did suck sweetness from the speech) thou hast ravished my heart with thy sight. How can we question Christs love to beleevers, when his eyes are thus fixed on them, that their sight doth ravish his soul? Build upon it O beleeving soul! Christs delight in looking on thee doth demonstrate his love to thee. He peeps through the Latteſſes, to declare his love, *Cant.* 2. 9. Nay, as if he were over-powred (as indeed such an effect doth a look of love produce) while he beholds beleevers, he saith, *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me*, Cant. 6. 5. The word is, חֲרִהִיבֻנִי, and it

לִבַּבְתִּנִי

i. e. Thou hast heartned me.

signifies, *have made me proud*, or as our Margent hath it, *have puft me up*, Christ

Christ seems to pride himself in the looks of beleevers; his eye is on them, and his heart is taken up, if their eye be on him.

2 *Christs tongue speaks his love to beleevers.* The tongue is loves trumpet; the breathings of the Heart fill the Lips with sounds of love: Love that is secret in the bosome, sounds sweetly in the breath. Speech as a Silver trumpet loudly sounds love. It is said of *Shechem* the Son of *Hamor*, that his *Soul clave unto* Dinah *the daughter of Jacob*, and the Text saith, *he loved her*, and his tongue spake it; for it is added, that *he spake kindly to the Damosell*, Gen. 34. 31. Beleevers, Christs tongue bewrays him; his lips speak his love to you; Oh how oft hath Christ spoke sweetly to thy Soul? O beleever! Canst not thou gather by his *speaking to thy heart* (for that is the Hebrew phrase for speaking kindly) the love of his heart? How near thy heart, O soul! do those words of thy Saviour go? *If any*

Lingua amoris tuba.

דבר על לב

thirst, let him come and drink freely. Doth not his heart open as a fountain of love in this speech? And speaks hee not to thy heart, *i. e.* very kindly, when he saith, *If thou do but thirst, come and drink?* Ask the poor Woman that had the bloudy issue, *Mark* 5. whether or no Christ did not speak to her in the language of love, when he said, *Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole?* Poor heart, she had touched him as she thought at unawares; and when she heard him speak of it, she trembles, as if she expected words of wrath: But while she touched his garment secretly, love touched his heart sweetly, and his tongue bespeaks it, when he called her *Daughter.* And as Christs tongue trumpets out love, when he speaketh to, so when he speaketh of beleevers. O the *high Epithites*, (i. e. that which he addes to beleevers names, when he speaketh of their persons!) how *rhetorical*, how *encomiastical* is the language of his love! when he speaks

Ἐπίθετον καλλος. *apud Hermog.*

ſpeaks of his Spouſe, *Thou art faire,* (ſaith he) *thou art fair, thou haſt Doves eyes; thy hair is as a flock of Goats, thy teeth are like a flock of Sheep; thy lips are like a thread of ſcarlet, thy neck like the tower of* David, &c. *Cant.* 4.1,2,3,4. As beleevers declare their love to Chriſt by ſpeaking highly of him; ſo Chriſt declares his love to beleevers by ſpeaking highly of them. If beleevers call him the *Lilly of the vallies,* he calls them the *Lilly among the thorns.* Chriſts love will not permit him to ſpeak of them in low language. Thus the lips of your Lord, O beleevers! are a demonſtration of his love to you.

3 *Chriſts actions ſeal to the truth, and ſtrengthen the demonſtration of the Doctrin.* If there were nothing but the *eye* or the *tongue,* it might bee feared, leſt the love expreſſed by them, were but either *feigned* or *fond:* But actions following theſe, ſeal it up, that the love is not *complemental,* but *cordial.* If love be only in the *lip,* it is without *life,* and it may be

suspected as counterfeit: But *when men not only speak, but act love, then love lives, and is love indeed.* Indeed, where love is in truth, it will bee seen in act; every action being only *Loves Lackey* to go of its *errands*, and Loves servant to do its work. Now should we take a view of the actions of Jesus Christ, we shall see that they strive to excel and exceed his words in the declaration of his love to beleevers, I shall only hint at some, as intending the larger Discourse of them in the next Doctrin.

Actis amoris ancilla.

1 Consider *Jesus Christ manifesting himself, and his secrets, to beleeving souls*: and this will demonstrate the truth of his love. *Dalilah* questions the truth of *Sampsons* love, from the concealment of his secrets from her, *How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me*, saith she, *Judg.* 16. 15. Thus she seems to argue, Where there is love in truth, there will be a communication of secrets: But this I finde not

not in thee; therefore I question whether thou indeed dost love me. However *Dalilah* did, or might argue thus against her *Sampson*, Beleevers cannot argue so against their Saviours love. The Lord Jesus *unbosometh* himself to Beleevers, the secrets of his heart are with them. Christ tells his Disciples that hee would *manifest himself unto them*, *Joh.* 14. The men of the world are strangers to Christs affections, and therefore they are so to his secrets. Carnal people do not know the minde of the Lord, because hee doth not love them: But we (saith *Paul*) that is, we who are beloved by Christ, we have the minde of Christ, 1 *Corint.* 2. 16. Look as the Father loveth the Son, and declares it by this, that he *sheweth him all things which himself doth*, Joh. 5. 20. In like manner, the Son loveth beleevers, and actually demonstrates it by this, that he declares all things (*i. e.* all these secrets which were needful for them to know)

'Εμφανίζω i. e. lay himself open.

that he heard of the Father, Joh. 15. 15. The secrets of Christs *Cabinet-counsel* are with those whom hee loves.

2 *Christ often takes Beleevers to his house, and feasts them.* Thus wee deal with our friends, and thus we declare to them our loves; Christ deals so with his. *The King hath brought me into his Chamber*, Cant. 1. 4. Nay he hath brought me into his *banqueting house*, Cant. 2. 4. When *David* would declare his love to *Barzillai*, he said, *Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me at* Jerusalem, 2 *Sam.* 19. 33. thus Christ often speaks, and declares his love to beleevers, Come thou to me, poor soul, and I will feed thee with me in *Jerusalem*. Nay, Christ declares his love, not only by inviting and bringing beleevers to his house, but also by coming to theirs; He doth *stand at their door, and knock*, and if they will but open, he will enter, *Apoc.* 3. 6. if they love him so much as to let him in, hee will

will come and declare his love by *dwelling with them*, Joh. 14. 23. And he will feast with them in their house, *i. e.* their hearts. And because he will declare hee comes to shew love, he will make the feast at his own cost. *He hath gathered his myrrhe with his spice*, for this purpose, as it is *Cant.* 5. 1. μονὴν ποιήσομεν *i.e.* make our abode, or long stay with.

3. *Christ unites himself to beleevers*, and in that demonstrates that hee loveth them. Affection begets union. *Austin* (long ago) defined Love to be the juncture of two in one. *Amor est junctura duo copulans*; Love it makes one of two. It is said of *Jonathan* and *David*, that their souls were *knit together*, 1 Sam. 18. 1. Christ and beleevers are knit together, & it is Christs *love* which makes the *knot*. Its a more than moral union which is between Christ and beleevers, they are not only his *friends*, and *brethren*, but his *Spouses*, and *Members*. If he bee a *Head*, they shall be the *body*; and if he be a *Vine*, they are the *branches*: Nay the union be-

between Christ and Beleevers, is nearer than that of the *vine* and *branches*; of no branch can it be said (properly) *that it is in the vine, and the vine in it*: But of Beleevers it is said, *Christ is in them, and they are in him.* This union demonstrates also the truth of Christs love to beleeving souls. I shall now make a word of Application, and conclude this point. There be but three uses unto which I will speak, viz. a use of { *Information*, *Comfort*, and *Counsel.*

Use I. The point *informs us of the sweetness of Christ to all the Saints.* O how sweet! how kind! how gracious! is Jesus Christ to beleevers, thus to minde them, thus to set his heart upon them? Beleevers, the Lord loves you, Is he not in this sweet unto you? *Ruth* at the consideration of *Boaz* his love, falleth on her face, and saith, *Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing*

I

I am a ſtranger? Fall on your faces Beleevers, you were once *ſtrangers* to Jeſus Chriſt, but you have found *grace in his eyes*; your names are written upon his heart in letters of love: well may you ſay that Chriſt is ſweet, ſeeing he loves ſuch ſtrangers as you were. The King of *Iſrael* is ſurely ſweet in ſetting his love upon you, who were ſtrangers unto *Iſrael*. O how happy art thou, O poor beleever, in being the object of thy Lords love! The meaneſt beleever may raiſe up a very *high ſtructure of happineſſe*, upon this *corner ſtone*, Chriſts love. O how bleſſed art thou in thy beloved (poor ſoul!) and how ſweet is hee to thee! that hath alway a fire of love burning in his boſome towards thee?

II. This point is very *comfortable* to beleevers: It is a *cordial* to you, is it not, O beleever! that Chriſt doth love you? doth it not revive your hearts (my brethren) to hear, that hee who is the Lord of Life, and Glory

glory in himself, is a Lord of grace and love to you? Jesus Christ who *hath written upon his Garments, Lord of Lords*, hath also *written upon his bosome, love to beleevers*. Certainly (Beleevers) could you but see how near you are to Christ, how highly he prizeth you, how dearly he loves you; I should not need to bid you rejoyce, or be glad, or be of good comfort.

Object. No, will the soul say, Indeed you need not, *if I could but see that Christ loved me, but I doubt that.*

Resp. Doubt it not (O beleeving soul) but be *confident*, and in that confidence bee *comforted*: Christ loves you; and that (as wee shall shew hereafter) with a *transcendent love*.

Object. But it is good to have a ground of confidence; and in vain shall you comfort me, if I see no reason in your words. *Why what reason is there that Christ should love mee?*

Resp.

Ref. *Christs love is its own reason.* He therefore loves because he will. It may be the vanity of our wanton love, that we love meerly because we love: But it is the glory of Christs love, that he doth so. *The reason why Christ loves thee* (O poor soul) *is in his own bosome. If thou look in thine, thou wilt not finde it* (because it is not there) *but look up into Christs bosome,* and there it is. *He will have mercy upon whom he will.* Christ will love thee, and doth love thee (O Beleever) because *he will.* Do not therefore stand questioning *why he should,* but be comforted, and rejoyce in this, *that he doth love thee,* even *thee* (O poor soul.) Though it may bee thy faith be little, yet Christs love to thee is true.

Mark and mind this.

Q. But though he love me now, will he love me still? *Will not Christ dislike me hereafter, and upon that dislike desert me? Sure I am I shall give him cause, and I fear he will take it. And certainly if Christ desert, I dye, I cannot live longer than I have his love.*

A. Nei-

A. Neither dye, nor doubt, poor soul! Thy Lord so loves thee, that he will not leave thee; or if he do for a time, he will not alway. *Christs bowels burn with love, and that fire, however smothered for a time, will break out in a flame at last.* Christs love is like himself, immutable and unchangeable. *Love is Christs life as well as thine*: He will not surely kill himself by deserting thee. Thou canst not live except Christ do love, neither can Christ. Your Lord hath sworn (*and surely if he break his oath he dyes*) that the Mountains shall be removed, but his love shall not leave thee.

Obj. *Oh! But though Christ do love me, yet men hate me.* I cannot be so cheerful in Christs love, because I meet with the creatures wrath.

Rep. I pity thee poor Creature, thou hast the *love of the Potter*, and thou feareſt the wrath of the *Potsherd.* Why art thou so weak, as to sink under the *Creatures wrath*, while thou hast the *Creators love*?

Be

Be of good comfort, Christ can break in peeces all thy enemies with his *Iron rod*, while in the mean time he will comfort thee with his *Shepherds-crook*. Why doſt thou droop at the hatred of him, who dwelleth in a Tabernacle of clay, and not rather *triumph* in the love of him, who is *ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high*? Look up Beleever, Heaven is clear over thy head, though the earth be dirty under feet; though thou be in a *ſtorm* among the creatures, yet the *Sun of love* ſhines on thee from Chriſt. He ſmiles and loves thee, what though men frown and hate thee? Fear not him who hates thy body, and at worſt can but deſtroy that; rejoyce rather in him who loves thy ſoul, and at the laſt will raiſe up thy body from the Grave, and give thee a glorious body like unto his own, and fill thy ſoul with eternal joy in the enjoyment of his everlaſting love.

The laſt uſe of the point is for *counſel*.

counsel. Sith Christ loves his Saints, I would (surely the point might, and doth) counsel, both *the world*, and *beleevers.*

First, you *men of the world*; *If you have an ear to hear, hear: Christ loves beleevers, be yee counselled to do the like.* Certainly Christ will take it well at your hands, if you love them who are beloved by him. His friends are sometime strangers in your Land, use them well, shew them love, put it upon Christs score; he loves them, and he will reward you: Jesus Christ doth so love beleevers, as that he will not let a *cup of cold water, given to them in his name,* (that is, because hee loves them) go unrewarded. I say it again, sith Christ is gracious, and loves beleevers, be ye wise and love them also. However, *take heed that yee do not wrong them.* If you will not do them good, beware you do them no hurt: Beleeve it, if you do, Christ loves them, and he will not bear it. Tremble, lest, (while you lift up your

your hand againſt beleevers) that Jeſus Chriſt who loves them, daſh you in peeces. Beware of *perſecuting Chriſts beloved ones under pretences.* It will be but a poor excuſe, to ſay they were *Schiſmaticks*, Chriſt knows them to be *Saints*: Beleeve it, the bloud of beleevers is very precious, and as he will puniſh Antichriſtian wretches, *under what names, or titles ſoever diſtinguiſhed*; So alſo will he be avenged upon all thoſe who dare touch beleevers, under what *nick-names ſoever diſgraced.* Therefore if you will not be ſo *wiſe*, as to *love*; yet be not ſo *mad*, as to *hurt* thoſe *whom Chriſt loves.*

But ſecondly, *let this counſel beleevers*, ſith the Lord Jeſus loves them, that they would *walk worthy thereof.* Beleevers, live as the objects of Chriſts love; *Advance his Kingdom, imbrace his counſels, love all his members, be abundant in his work, and ſervice.* In all things ſhew that Chriſts love to you hath a conſtraining power in you; at leaſt be *yee*

counselled to love Christ, who loves you and that so much the rather, because Christ deserves thy love, though thou do not deserve his. O let not the love of Christ plead against you, and say, I ranne out to them, but they returned not in to me. Let not Christ say, I gave you counsel, and you did reject it; In love I gave you Commandements, and you did transgresse them. No, but sith Christ loves you, love him; and if *you love him, keep his Commandements*. Rouse up your selves, O beleeving souls! and considering that Christ loveth you, demean your selves accordingly. If he *call, come*; If he *bid* you go, *go*; If his Kingdom be advancing, joyn in the work (*it is the Kingdom of him that loves you*) If his Spirit *counsel, take* it (for it comes from love.) In a word, in all things live as those who indeed are *beloved of Christ*. And let your carriage be *exactly obedient, kinde*, and *loving unto him*, who doth stoop so low, as to love such poor creatures as you be.

And

And if any ask, why you love, and labour for Jesus Christ? tell them, it is because you love him: And adde withall, that did they but know how Christ loves you, they would rather ask, why you love him so little, or do for him no more: But if they demand, *how doth* Christ love you? Tell them, that question is unanswerable. Indeed say, he *loves* you and that *truly*; but withall *transcendently*. That Christ loves you, tell all the world of *you know*; but *how* he loves, tell them, that *passeth your knowledge*: yea and the knowledge of every creature, for it is a *love passing knowledge*. And this is the next thing, and the chief thing which we shall speak of.

SERMON II.

EPHES. 3. *ver.* 19.
And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

CHRISTS love is the Saints life. *Paul* tells you, he was *dead to the Law, that he might live to God.* And the ground thereof was this, that hee lived by *faith in Christ, who loved him,* Galath. 2. 20. As the *life,* so likewise the *comfort* of the Saints is wrapped up in the *love of Christ.* A beleever can neither *live,* nor *rejoyce,* if the Lord Jesus *smile* not upon his soul: But if Jesus Christ wil but *smile,* and

and ſhine in the *light of love*, Beleevers know, not only how to *live*, but alſo how to rejoyce, in all, even the worſt of times. Hence it was, that this Apoſtle praying to *the Father of our Lord Jeſus*, for the *Epheſians*, that they might not faint *at his tribulations*, He intreats, that, to this purpoſe, they might know the *love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge*.

Having briefly touched at the *reality* of Chriſts love to beleevers (as it is included in this place) I ſhall now ſpeak more largely to the *royalty* thereof (as it is ſet out in this phraſe) that it *paſſeth knowledge*. Whence our ſecond point was this, *viz.*

That love which Chriſt beareth to beleevers, is a tranſcendent love.

You ſee how fully this point lies in theſe words. It muſt needs bee *tranſcendent*, ſith the Apoſtle ſaith, it *paſſeth knowledge*.

I ſhall indeavour to open the point, and give you the meaning thereof, by bringing you to the

top of this *high hyperbolical* expression, in three steps or staires.

First, *The love of Christ to Beleevers is transcendent, it being above expression.* Those who enjoy Christs love, they know not how to expresse it, such is the *transcendency* of the love, that it *passeth their knowledge* how to expresse it in any Language. The Scripture sets out the height of things by this, that they are *unspeakable*: So when it would heighten, and declare the transcendency of that *rapture* in which *Paul* was (when wrapped up to the third heavens) and the glory of that which he then heard, it sets it down by this, that it was unutterable, *He heard unspeakable words*, (which may be an Hebraism for things, *word* and *thing* being in the Hebrew convertible) *which it was not possible for a man to utter*, 2 Cor. 12. 14. In like manner when the Scripture speaks of the transcendent joy which Beleevers rejoyce withall by beleeving, It useth this

דבר apud Hebræos est & verbum, & res.

phrase,

phraſe, that it was unſpeakable, 1 Pet. 1. 8. *Yee rejoyce with joy unſpeakable.*

And it muſt not be paſſed by in ſilence, that the joy of which *Peter* ſpeaks, is that which Beleevers have by faith, which certainly is founded upon Chriſts love; So *that if the joy in the faith of Chriſts love be unſpeakable, the love it ſelf is much more*: For *quod efficit tale, eſt magis tale* (as the Logicians ſpeak) i. e. *That which makes any thing ſo, or ſuch, is much more it ſelf ſo, or ſuch.* This may be the firſt ſtep to aſcend the height of the expreſſion, and to declare the tranſcendency of Chriſts love to beleevers, *It paſſeth knowledge* in this, that no man (no, though he had the *tongues of men and Angels*) knows how to expreſſe it.

2 *Chriſts love is tranſcendent, and may be ſaid to be above knowledge, in that it is above apprehenſion.* As the Language of Beleevers cannot expreſſe, ſo neither can their know-

ledge apprehend the height of their Saviours love. Men often can apprehend more than they can expresse; when the tongue is silenced, the understanding may be comprehensive. But now, in the love of Christ there is that, which poseth and confoundeth the very intelectuals of men and Angels. It is so *high*, as that there is no *reaching of it*; so deep, as that there is no *sounding of it*; so *long*, as that it exceeds *measuring*; and so *broad*, that there is no *comprehending* it. The most Spiritual Mathematician is not able to commensurate Christs love in all its dimensions. It is as possible for that little *Crevise* of the body (the Eye) to let in all the light of the Sun, as it is for that *great eye* of the Soul (*knowledge*) to let in the lustre of Christs love. The Holy Ghost, when hee would set out a thing as transcendent, he useth this phrase, that it is such as *cannot be comprehended*. As now, speaking of the great things which God doth,

doth, it is ſaid *they are ſuch as wee cannot comprehend*, Job 37. 5. Without doubt, as the *operation of the Fathers hand, ſo the expanſion of the Sons heart*, is ſuch, as *cannot be comprehended.*

In this, the *Fathers works*, and the Sons *loves*, do equally tranſcend, that they *paſſe knowledge*, and are not able to be apprehended.

3 Chriſt bears to beleevers a tranſcendent love, & it *paſſeth knowledge*, in this, that it is above conception. Fancy can conceive that which Reaſon cannot comprehend. The Underſtanding being bounded by Reaſon, cannot go beyond its limits; and therefore where Reaſon cannot ſuggeſt, the Underſtanding cannot apprehend. But now fancy is winged, and it will fly: It doth (as *Scaliger* ſpeaks) *Aſpernare cæterorum finium præſcriptionem, It ſcorneth to be bounded, though by Reaſon it ſelf*: It flyeth high, and will gueſſe (at leaſt) at the tranſcendent height of that which reaſon

reason cannot reach. Yet such (my beloved) is the love of Christ; It is so *high*, so *superlatively-transcendent*, that let fancy loose, and let it *fly* as high as it can, it is not able to *soare* to the *top* thereof. As the understanding going to its utmost bounds: So *fancy flying* beyond all bounds, is not able to conceive what is the love of Christ to Beleevers.

So that now when I say, the *love which Christ Bears to Beleevers is transcendent*, and when you read in the text, that it *passeth knowledge*, You may take the meaning thus; That it is above the *expression of the finest* Oratory, *the comprehension of the deepest* Theory, *and the conception of the sublimest* Fancy; In so much, as let *Oratory* speak, *Wisdom* study, *Fancy* fly, yet neither the one, nor the other, nor all, are, able to *express, apprehend, or conceive* what is the love of Christ to beleevers. Indeed the love of Christ is such, as heaven it self (*though it be the State*

of

of ſight) doth not (as hereafter we ſhal ſhew) exalt the Saints ſo high, as to make them able to comprehend that love, in the *fields* whereof they do *walk* and live. It is with the Saints in Heaven, as with the Fiſhes in the Sea; they ſwim up and down the mighty waters, but yet they do not, cannot comprehend that *watry world* in which they live: In like manner, the Saints above, though they *ſwim* up and down the *infinite Ocean of love* (which is in their Saviours boſom) yet they can no more comprehend that vaſt *ſea of love*, in which to eternity they ſhall bathe, and bleſſe their ſouls, than the little *Fiſh* can comprehend the *great Sea* in which it ſwims. Wherefore (ere I proceed further) let me premiſe this, That it is not in my thoughts, nor dare I preſume this, neither would I have you expect, that by any thing which I ſhall or can ſay, I ſhall be able to ſet out the *infiniteneſs of that love* (of which we ſhal treat) according to his full Latitude, and worth,

worth. No, this I despair of; only I desire to let you see some of the glimmering beams of that *transcendent love* which is in Christs bosome towards beleevers, so as that you may wonder at it, and set about the exacter study of it. And look as a *Painter*, when he intends to draw out the *Sea*, or the World in a *Map*, hee maketh only some *little shadows* of the Earth and Sea, that so the beholder may be inabled to guesse at the vastnesse thereof: In like manner I shall *draw* before you (in my Discourse) some *little shadowy pricks*, or *lines of Christs love*, that thereby I may help you somewhat to imagine, what is that *infinite transcendent love*, which neither Saints nor Angels are able (in all its lustre and dimensions) to *paint out* or discover.

For the proof, I shall not need to adde more Scriptures, it being clear enough by what the Apostle speaks in this place of Christs love, that it is transcendent. In the

the verſe before this, the Apoſtle hints, that there are all the *dimenſions* in Chriſts love, which may ſerve to declare any thing vaſt and infinite. There is a *breadth*, and *length*, and *depth*, and *height* in the love of Chriſt. And it is worth the noting, the Apoſtle doth not tell *how great* thoſe dimenſions were; He doth not ſay *how broad*, or *how long*, or *how deep*, or *how high*; but (as if the dimenſions of Chriſts love did tranſcend his knowledge) he paſſeth it by, and only adds this, *that this love paſſeth knowledge.*

I finde not this phraſe (to my beſt remembrance) but once more in the New Teſtament, and that is *Philip.* 4. 7. where *Paul* ſpeaking of the tranſcendency of the *Peace of God*, he ſaith, *it paſſeth underſtanding.* Certainly, it is the glory of *Chriſts love* (as well as of his *Fathers peace*) that it alſo *paſſeth underſtanding.*

If at your leaſure you read, and reading *ſpiritually conſider*, what is pre-

presented to *faith*, in the Book of the *Canticles*, you will see this truth (that the love of Christ to beleevers is transcendent) in the glory and *convincing power*, and *proof* thereof. It may be in your time you have *misspent* some hours in reading of some *Romances*, And you have wondred at some strange Stories of Love which you have met withall: But alas! should you compare the highest love that ever you read of, with the love of Christ to Beleevers, you will be forced to confess; that that love, in comparison of this, is but like the *story* it self, *i. e.* a meer *fancy*. If ever strength of affection were set out in sweetness of expression, It is in that Book to a Spiritual eye: when I do but consider the fourth Chapter only of that *Song*, I cannot chuse but wonder at the high transcendency of Christs love to beleevers. Surely I conclude, the *affections are sweet, strong, glorious, unconceivable*, when the *expressions* thereof are so *ravishing*, so great, so *high*, as in that Chapter they are.

I

I shall give one general demonstration, to let you see the truth of the Doctrin, that Christs love to beleevers is transcendent: The demonstration take thus;

That love which includeth in it, and comprehends all kinds, acts, or demonstrations of love whatsoever, must needs be a transcendent love.

But such is the love of Christ to Beleevers, &c. Therefore, &c. I suppose the *Major* is clear enough, and needs no proof. The Painter took the direct, and undeniable way to make the Picture of *Minerva* transcend, and excel all other Beauties, when he *epitomized*, or contracted all the several rays, and particular beauties that were scattered up and down in other Persons, or Pictures, in that one peece. It is upon this ground an *axiome indubitable*, and beyond or above Dispute, That the *Sun doth farre transcend in Light, any, or all the other Lights, Moon, or Stars, &c.* because in its Light, all theirs

is

is contained, and that in an eminent manner.

All the question is about the *Minor*; *whether that Christs love be such to beleevers*, as that it includes and contains in it, all other *kindes* or *acts* of love whatsoever. Now this I shall put out of question by an *Induction, or enumeration of the several kindes*, or acts of love.

Amongst other (how exactly I will not determine) the *Moralists* tell us of these four kindes of love, as the chief, *viz.*

1 *A love of Friendship.*
2 *A love of Pity.*
3 *A love of Sympathy.*
4 *A love of Complacency.*

In these four only, I shall instance (*which I had rather call several demonstrations, or degrees of one and the same passion of love, than particular kindes distinct*) and shall shew that Christs love to Beleevers, includes, and contains in it all of them, and that therefore it must needs be transcendent.

1 *The*

1 *The love of friendship* is so called (not as if it were the *habit of friendship* it self, but) because it is that kinde, or *act of love, whereby we prosecute or follow one, whom we look upon, and love as a friend; and to whom we wish good.* Now this *kinde* (or rather *degree*) *of love*, is in the *love of Christ to beleevers*; Christ looks upon, and loves all beleevers as *friends*; hence it is, that he counts, and calls them all by that name, *ye are my friends*, Joh. 15.14. And that this is real, appears by his dealing with them. Therefore it is added, *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of the Father, I have made known unto you*, ver. 15. Those whom we love as *friends*, wee open our minds unto; and it is their privilege, wee communicate to them secrets which we have heard. Christ dealeth thus with beleevers, and thus dealing, doth not he declare to them the *love of friendship?*

2 *The love of pity.* This falleth in, and followeth upon the former; for (as *Job* saith) *To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed by his friend,* Job 6. 14. This also is included in Christs love to beleevers. For upon that *love of friendship* which he bears to them, he acteth this of *pity* still towards them; when *no eye pitied them, his eye did.* When sinners, and Satan rather *laugh* at their misery, and say, *Aha, Aha, so would wee have it.* Christ he as it were *sighs* to see their sorrows, and indeed *pities* their souls: Hence it is said, *Isa. 63. 9. In his love, and in his pity hee redeemed them* (it was real pity it did work) *and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

3 *The love of Sympathy* (which in truth is but a *high degree of pity*) is also contained in the love of Christ to beleevers. Men *sympathize* with those whom they love; when they do (as it were) take up their miseries upon themselves, and be as if they were in their Friends case.

Thus

Thus doth Jesus Christ, when hee sees any beleever groan either under sin, or sadness, he comes, and by a *sympathy* doth *afflict himself* (For in all their afflictions (saith the Prophet) *he was afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9.) as if he himself was in their sadness, and under their sin. The Author to the Hebrews tells us, *Wee have not an high Priest who cannot* συμπαθῆσαι i. e. *sympathize with our infirmities*, cha. 4. 15. His meaning is, that indeed our *high Priest*, *Jesus Christ*, *doth sympathize* with beleevers in their sorrows. And in Chap. 5. 2. it is said of Christ, that *he can have compassion of the ignorant*; that word is μετριοπαθεῖν and it signifies as much as, Hee knoweth how to pity according to the measure of our misery. Let the misery be never so great (for with reference to great *measure*) I beleeve the Metaphor is used) Jesus Christ knows how to *measure* out as great a *measure* of *sympathy*, as is needful. So that Christs love to Beleevers you see contains in it also the

love of sympathy.

Lastly, For the love of *complacency* (which indeed is the highest degree of love) this also is in Christs love contained. You have a description of this love of complacency (and a demonstration also of the thing in hand) *Zeph.* 3. 17. *The Lord thy God* (which I understand of Christ) *in the middest of thee, is mighty, he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.* It is the nature of the love *of complacency to rest in its self*, and to rejoyce in its lettings out unto its object, as it were with singing. Thus doth Christ to beleevers: He first loves them, and then *rests* in that love, and after solaceth himself in their souls, & rejoyceth with singing, while he rests in his love, with them, over them, in them. Look as the Father did from all eternity, by his *love of complacency*, *rest* in the Son, and took his delight in him, as it is, *Prov.* 8. 30. So doth Jesus Christ

God is only cure in Christ. Christ is called, עִמָּנוּאֵל i. e. *God with us*, or *our God.*

Christ rest in beleeverss, and he solaceth himself in their persons; for as it is there added, *ver.*31. *His delights were in the sons of men.* Thus doth Christs love to beleevers (you see) comprehend in it this highest *kinde*, (or rather *degree*) of love, *viz.* that of *complacency*.

So that (now to wind up the demonstration) Look as the *Sea* doth transcend all other *Rivers*, because that they all come, and empty themselves into it: In like manner doth the *love of Christ* excel all loves whatsoever, and is transcendent; In as much as all the *kindes*, *acts*, or *degrees* of love which run up and down among the creatures, (as it were in several Chanels) do all *meet*, and *empty themselves in Christs bosome*, as into *the vast ocean of love*, and thence *flow forth* into *the bosomes of Beleevers*, as the sole choyce peculiar *Cisterns* of the same: great, high, transcendent love.

But because my design is a little

to *lose my self* in this Discourse of love, I shall for the further making out, and discovery of the transcendency of Christs love to Beleevers, speak to it more particularly: And at this time I shall touch at the *substance* and *circumstances* of this love, and in both, shew how it doth transcend, and passe all knowledge.

1 For the *substance of the love of Christ to Beleevers*: It is such as if *rightly* (i. e. *spiritually*) considered: will appear to be *transcendent*. There are (to omit others) but four things which I shall touch upon briefly, as the substantial declarations of the Hyperbolical excellency of this love.

viz. 1 *The nature*, 2 *The degrees*, 3 *The duration*, 4 *The operation* } of this love.

1 To begin with the *Nature of Christs love to Beleevers*, It is transcendent, it being of the same nature *that*

that the Fathers is to him. Jeſus Chriſt loves beleevers with the ſame kind, or nature of love, with which the Father loves himſelf. *His love* to them, and his *Fathers* love to him, for *nature* are all one: And if there be tranſcendency in the one, (*viz.* the Fathers love to Chriſt) there muſt needs be alſo in the other, (*viz.* Chriſts love to Beleevers) for they are in their nature both the ſame. Chriſt himſelf bears record to this truth. *As the Father hath loved me, ſo I have loved you,* Joh. 15. 9. That you may fully *feel the weight* of this demonſtration, take it in theſe three Concluſions briefly.

1 *Of all love, that is the moſt tranſcendent love which is in God.* For *God* (as the Spirit ſaith) *is love,* 1 Joh. 4. 16. Water in the Fountain is the ſweeteſt, and love, in like manner, in God is cleareſt, for he is *the God of love,* 2 Cor. 13. 11. Look as *light in the Sun* is the moſt tranſcendent; So love in God muſt needs tranſcend, becauſe *love* is in him, as

light is in the *Sun*, i. e. In its prime, and proper *orbe* or seat. And indeed, as every *beam* of *light* is but the *irradiation* of the Sun, so all the love which is in the bosomes of Creatures, is but like some *little drops of dew*, which first fell from the *Heaven* of love, Gods bosome.

2 *Of all the love which is in God, that is the most transcendent, which he lets out to Christ.* It is Christs glory that he is *crowned with the flower, beauty*, and *glory* of the *fathers love*. Jesus Christ was he, who is still, not only the *beloved*, but *the wel-beloved of the Father*; in whom he was *well pleased*, i, e. In whom the *Father* did rest in the highest degree of his love. And apparent it is, by all the actions of God, that he loved Christ with the most transcendent kind of love. In as much as that he *made all things for him, gives all things to him, and lets not out so much as a drop of love to any creature, but that it first runs into his bosome, and so through him to the*

Creature,

Creature. The very ſpirits and *quinteſſence* of *that love which* is in Gods boſome, was let out (and *that without meaſure*) into Chriſts. Now,

3 *That love which Chriſt bears to beleevers, is the ſame which he had from the Father.* As it flowed from the Fathers boſome into his, ſo it flows from his boſome into beleevers; It is the ſame love for *nature*, and *quality*. As every *drop* of the *Sea* is the ſame for *quality*, that all the water in the *Sea* is: So every drop of love which falls in upon the boſomes of Beleevers, from Chriſts, is of the ſelf-ſame *nature*, and is the ſame for *quality*, which the *Father* bears to him. Indeed there is difference in the *quantity*. And the reaſon is, becauſe our *Ciſternes* are not ſo capacious as Chriſts *Ciſtern*. And yet ſo much as we can contain, we ſhall have, as I ſhall ſhew by and by.

So that now, herein is the firſt thing, wherein the tranſcendency of Chriſts love to Beleevers appeareth;

eth; *It is the same for nature with that which the Father shews to himself.* Hence it was, and is, that Christ both did, doth, and will, *declare the Fathers name to beleevers*, that (as it is, *Joh.* 17. ult.) *the love wherewith the Father loved him, may be in them*, as he himself is in them.

2 If we consider *the degrees* in which, or the *measure* according to which Christ lets out his love to Beleevers, we shall see it is transcendent in that also. *Christ fils the bosome of beleevers with as much love as they can hold.* The creature when enlarged to the utmost, is not capable, neither can it contain more then they have; So that as the *nature* of the love is *high*; in like manner the *degree* is full. The Prophet *Jeremiah* speaking of *Gods wrath* against sinners, useth a *Metaphor* in which he compares Gods *wrath unto Wine* (as also the Psalmist doth, *Psal.* 75.8.) and sinners unto *bottles*; and setting out the degree of that wrath, He saith, *every bottle is full*

of

of wine, Jerem. 13. 12. Beloved, *Christs love* is compared to *Wine* also, *Cant.* 1. 4. And if you compare the *bosomes of Beleevers unto bottles*, (as you may) then certainly know, every bosome is full of the *wine of Christs love*. *The Justice of the Father* is not more *exact* to fill the bosome of sinners with his *wrath*, than the *grace of the Son*, is *free* to *fill* the bosomes of Beleevers *with his love*. Hence it is that he saith, *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*, *Psal.* 81. 10.

You read a *Box of Ointment*, which when it was opened, the whole house was *filled* with the odour thereof, *Joh.* 13. 3. such a *Box of Ointment* is the bosome of Christ, (as may bee gathered from *Cant.* 1. 3. which being opened in the houses, *i. e.* the hearts of beleevers, *fills* them [*full*] with the sweet savour thereof. And indeed, as Christ bids beleevers ask the *Father*, that their joy might be *full*: So hee is as *bountiful* himself (as he would have

have his *Father* to be) and therefore without their asking (for he *loveth first*) he lets out, yea and *fills* them with his love. In this life beleevers have (at least might) *as much love as faith can let in*; and if the soul be not full, it is only because the *mouth is narrow* (as the *bottle with the narrow neck in the Ocean*;) And hereafter, as much as *vision* it self can *swallow*. So that now the transcendent fulnesse of that *degree* in which Christ lets out his love to beleevers, doth evidently declare the love to be transcendent also.

3 Adde to both these the consideration of the *duration of Christs love to beleevers*; and this will further demonstrate its transcendency. As the nature is high, and the degree full, so the duration is constant, and perpetual. *Having loved his own, he loved them, εἰς τέλος* i.e, *to the end*; it may be, to the perfection, *Joh.* 13. 1. Christs love is once and ever. It is of the same nature with himself, unchangeable. As nothing

thing in Beleevers was so good as to make him to set his love upon them; so nothing is so bad, as doth make him take it off again. Indeed sometime the visible actings, or demonstrations, may be concealed, but still the love it self remains sure, and is never violated; That look as Divines say of Christ upon the Crosse, *The beatifical vision was suspended, but the hypostatical union was not dissolved*; In like manner, though the *light of Christs love* may be for a time obscured, yet the life thereof is still preserved. The love may be *dark* sometime, but *dyes* never. There is nothing, no not *sin*, that can totally, and finally separate between Christs love, and a beleevers soul. *Paul* asketh the question, (to this day it is unanswered, yea and unanswerable) *What shall separate?* Rom. 8. 35. *The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed* (saith Christ) *but my kindnesse shall not depart*, Isa. 54. 10. Beleevers, those high Hills which you sometimes see,

see, at whose sight ye wonder: And the mighty mountains which you behold sometime, and are amazed at their vastnesse; those very hills and mountains not only may, but shall depart: But yet the love of Christ towards you, is so transcendently high, and sure, that it shall not, nay cannot depart. So that, as the very *heavens themselves wax old like a garment, and yet the person of Christ remaineth; even so shall heaven, earth, every creature wax old, decay, and dye; But still the love of Christ towards beleevers, shall continue young, fresh, and flourishing:* Such is its duration, such shall be its continuance. Indeed the very life of Christ, must depart, and he dye again, ere his love to his can decay: For his love is not only the Beleevers life, but his own, (as was hinted formerly) O the transcendency of this love, which shall thus last.

4 Consider now in the last place, *the operation of Christs love to beleevers*; and you shall see its transcendency

dency answerable to its *nature, degree,* and *duration.* We guesse at the transcendency of things by the nobleness of their operations. It is a certain rule, *the more noble any thing doth operate, the more noble it is in its self.* Love of all the affections being the most noble, answerably it hath the most noble operations. Christs love will easily appear to be transcendent, if we consider how much more nobly it operates than any other love in the world. From the first point of time untill this, yea and till time shall be no more; the operations of Christs love to beleevers, have been, are, and shall bee transcendently glorious and noble.

I shall not in this place so curiously search into all actions of Christ (because I shall more particularly speak to them by themselves) to let them therefore passe; I shall only instance in five particulars, and in them you shall see the transcendent operations of the

love

love of Christ to beleevers.

1 *There was no condition so low, unto which Christ did not condescend, to declare that his love* did transcend. High love stoops low; and the higher still the love is, the lower still it stoops. You may take loves elevation, by its condescention; and the lower still that you observe love condescendeth, the higher alway you must conclude it is elevated. I think it was but a fancy, which one reporteth of a great Prince, who (it is said) took upon him both the habit, and imployment of a Dayes-man, working to build a House (in which his beloved was) that he might visit her. Yet let me tell you, it is no fancy, but a reality in Jesus Christ, that out of the height of his love to beleevers, he took upon him both the *form*, and the imployment of a *Dayes-man* (which some think, though I do not, to be intended in that of *Job* 9. 33.) to declare not only his obedience to his Father, but his love

to

to beleevers. *He emptied himself, or made himself vain* (for so the word ἐκένωσεν may be translated) *and took upon him the form of a Servant, &c. Phil.* 2. 7. Christ became of no reputation, that his love to Beleevers might bee of high reputation. O how nobly did Christs love operate towards beleevers, when he stooped so low for their sakes!

2 *There was no action so meah, which he did not cheerfully undertake, to declare his love to beleevers.* Royall love doth (as it were) debase the Soul, to any (though the meanest) service, to declare it self. *Jacob* will bee a Servant, and keep Sheep in the heat of Summer, and the cold of Winter, rather than not shew his love to *Rachel*. And Jesus Christ will wash his Disciples feet (a mean imployment) and though he be Lord of all, will be a servant unto all his Disciples, that hee may not only teach them humility, and love one unto another, but also that he

may declare the height and transcendency of love unto them all.

3 *There is no failing so foul, which he doth not passe by, to declare the surpassing greatness of his love to beleevers.* Great love passeth by, and pardoneth, great faults; And the greater the faults are which be committed, the greater is the love by which they are pardoned. *Peter* failed grosly, when he denied, and forswore his Master: But love operated transcendently, when it passed that by. What failing more grosse against the bed of love, than *Adultery*? Surely the Sons of men will not passe it by; this fault doth transcend their love: yet though men will not, Christ will (as it is, *Jer.* 3. 1.) His love transcends this fault. Christs love to beleevers is far greater, and doth much transcend the love of men to their Wives, and therefore he doth that which they will not, *i. e.* Passe by the foul failing of Adultery. I take the Prophet clearly and precisely

ciſely to ſpeak this of Chriſt; for it is he alone who, as it is verſe 14. *is married unto beleevers.* It is the glory of mans love (and then doth love operate nobly) when he paſſes by an offence: It is much more the glory of Chriſts love, and that ſhews it ſelf tranſcendently glorious in its operation, by paſſing by the groſſe, and greateſt failings which are in beleevers.

4 *There was no gift ſo great, which Chriſt did not beſtow upon Beleevers.* Love produceth gifts. *Iſaacks* love to *Rebecca* was ſeen to be great, by the great gifts he ſent her, *A golden earing of half a ſhekel weight, and two bracelets of ten ſhekels weight of gold,* Gen. 24. 22. Chriſt gives Grace (which is far more precious than gold) to beleevers: *Out of his fulneſſe we receive grace for grace,* Joh. 1. 16. Nay, ſo great was his bounty, and ſo large were his gifts, *That he became poor for our ſakes* (that was by giving) *that by his poverty we might be made rich,* 2 Cor. 8. 9. But what

greater gift than himſelf? yet ſuch is the tranſcendent operation of Chriſts love, that hee gave himſelf for Beleevers ſakes, and to their ſouls.

5 Adde to all theſe, this alſo, that ſuch is the tranſcendent love of Chriſt to beleevers, that *there is nothing almoſt* ſo mean in them, but he highly prizeth it. Love prizes every thing in the party beloved. Chriſt doth both prize, and praiſe mean things in beleevers, becauſe his love towards them is mighty. Their *voyce* (though *inarticulate* (for ſo the word קול ſignifies) *is ſweet*, Cant. 2. 10. Their *love* (though *faint*) is *fair* with him, *Cant.* 4. 10. Their *gifts* (though *ſmall*) are ſo *prized, that where-ever the Goſpel of his love ſhall be preached, the gifts of their love ſhall alſo be divulged*, Mark 14. 9. Thus you ſee all along, how tranſcendently glorious, and noble the love of Chriſt operates towards beleevers: And what doth it declare but this, that *the love of Chriſt*

is

is indeed transcendent, passing knowledge?

Having thus briefly touched at some demonstrations of the transcendency of Christs love to beleevers, *substantially*: I shall now adde but a word or two, to demonstrate the same yet clearer, from some considerable *circumstances* about Christs love to beleevers.

There be four Circumstances, which I shall but mention, *viz.* The consideration,

1 *Of the Person loving.*
2 *Of the Persons beloved.*
3 *Of the time of this love.*
4 *Of the end thereof.*

1. Consider the *Person loving*, i. e. Jesus Christ. He being a transcendent Person, his love is like himself, transcendent also. *Persona est amoris mensura.* According to the dimension of the Person, so are the dimensions of the affection. The height of the lover, is the height also of the love. As the Moralists judge of the magnitude of Crimes, by the

persons against whom committed: So we may also conclude the greatnesse of the love, from the greatness of him by whom it is declared. A little wrath revealed by God is great, because he himself is great: And a little love let out by Christ, must be great love also, because hee is great. Fire is by so much the greater, and hotter, by how much the fuel, or matter in which it is, is the more combustible: Love is fire, and the flames thereof transcend and exceed, according to the vastness of the bosome in which it burns. Fire in Wood makes a great flame, and gives a great heat, but Fire in Brimstone flames more, and burns hotter; Love being in Christ, it is as fire in Brimstone, or rather as fire *in a Mount of Spices*, it must needs therefore give a great heat, and make a great light; and that light will discover his love to be transcendent. *As the man is, so is his strength* (said they of *Gideon*) Judg. 8. 11. *As the Lord is* (may we say of

of Christ) *so is his love.* He is *wonderful*, and his love must needs bee so too. Because wee are but little, therefore our love cannot be great; and because Christ is great, his love cannot be little. The love of the Lord Jesus cannot chuse but bee transcendent, *passing knowledge*, because himself is such. But

2 Consider the *Persons beloved*, and this (especially joyned with the former) will indeed demonstrate that the love of Christ is transcendent. Who are beleevers, that are thus beloved? Are they of any note or name? nothing lesse, *Worms* they are, and not *Men*. Nay not bigge, but poor *Worms*: For so *Jacob* is stiled, *Isa.* 41. 14. Hee that knoweth their frame, *remembreth well they are but dust*, Psa. 103. 14. But this is not all: for as they are *Worms*, so *worthlest ones*; and as they are but *dust*, so *defiled dust* too. Now that the *rich Jesus*, should love *poor Jacob*; That he who is so *mighty*, should affect beleevers so *mean*;

That he who is so *pure*, that hee is without *spot*, or *blemish*, should open his heart to such as are *spotted all over*, and whose very beauty (without him) is but a blemish; This heightens the love indeed, this declares that it doth transcend. He that knows how mean, worthlesse, contemptible Creatures beleevers are (without Christ) will quickly (if he consider that Christ loveth them) conclude that the love *passeth knowledge*.

3 If wee take into our thoughts *the time of love*, either when it was *first set*, *or first drawn forth*, we shall see by this also, that it is transcendent. For the *beginning* therefore, when it was *first set*, it bears date before time. Before time had either beginning, or being, Love had both, in Christs bosome, towards beleevers. Christs love to beleevers is an antienter building than the world: for when the one had no foundations, the other had.

Surely, if (as it is *Proverbs* 8. 31.)

his

his delights were in the Sons of men, that is, Beleevers, (for you may call all the reſt of the World, Sons of Sathan rather than Sons of men) if (I ſay) his delights were with the Sons of men, before the *fountains of the deep were ſtrengthened, or the foundations of the earth were appointed*; Then certainly his love was alſo towards them before that time, for his love was the ground of that delight. Indeed the firſt words which Chriſt wrote, was, Love to beleevers, and this was written with glory (for it was before Gold was) upon his boſome, for then other Books were not. And if the love were begun *time out of minde*, (as we ſay) then certainly the love is *paſſing knowledge* (as the Text ſaith.)

And for the time when it was firſt declared, The Prophet tels us, it was at ſuch a time, as in which we were moſt *unlovely*, *when we lay in our bloud*, and were not ſo lovely, as to provoke any eye to *pity* us: Then

Then did Christ *passe by, and it was the time of his love*; and then did his love break forth with the light of Life; for then he said *Live*, as it is, *Ezek.* 16.

Surely hee did shew wit, who fancied the feigned beloved, all besmeared with a poysoned hand, and made leprous thereby, and yet stories, that the Lover was as constant in love as ever: But we shall shew only the truth, and the transcendency of Christs love to Beleevers, if we affirm from Scripture History, When beleevers were all poysoned with the leprosie of sin, and lay as Lepers by the way side, then Jesus Christ came and took them by the hand, and opened the love of his heart, in letting out a stream of bloud to wash them, and make them clean. Now, that before ever the fountains of the deep were laid, a fountain of love should spring up in Christs bosome to beleevers, and that it should be opened in his *side*, at such a time as they

they lay in their filth; What doth this declare, but that Christs love to beleevers is transcendent, and (as it is in the Text) *passeth knowledge*; it being set, and declared at, or in such a time? Yet

Lastly, take in the consideration of that *end* which *Christ aimes at in his love to beleevers*, and this will declare it also to be *transcendent*. Christs love to beleevers is its own end: *He loves that he may love*; and this makes the love glorious. Jesus Christ (Beleevers) in all the love which hee lets out to you, aimes not at himself, but at you. Hee loves you now, that he may love you ever. The end which he drives at in declaring love in a lesser measure here, is, that he may declare love to you in a greater measure hereafter. He makes you *vessels of Grace* in this world, that you may be *vessels of Glory* in that which is to come. All the glory which hee aimed at for himself, was the glory of his *Grace*, and that shall be towards

wards you: Christ delights to set the *golden apple of his glory, in the silver picture of your good.* He being Love, only aims that men may see the *light* thereof; and he chose your bosomes (beleevers) as the golden *Candlesticks* to set up the glorious light of his love to shine in.

Now then, that so *infinite a Majesty* as Christ is, should love such *mean Worms* as beleevers be; And that he should set his love before the *first of the times*, and let it out in the *worst of times*, and that only for *their good, as the end*: Oh! who can consider this, but must sit down, and wonder, and cry out, O the transcendency of Christs love! How! how! doth it *passe knowledge?* Having thus demonstrated a little, I would now apply this point, at present, in three uses.

viz. 1 Of *Consolation.*
2 Of *Conviction.*
3 Of *Counsel.*

1 In as much as *Christ loveth beleevers with a transcendent love*; How may

may this *comfort* Beleevers at all times! Thou complaineſt, O beleeving Soul, that the World doth not love thee; nay, thou ſayeſt it doth hate thee; Why, be of good comfort, though the World hateth, Chriſt loveth; and the World cannot hate thee ſo much, as hee will love thee; His love doth tranſcend the Worlds hatred. What the *Angel* told *Daniel*, that ſay I to every beleeving ſoul, who groaneth under the hatred of the World, *Dan.* 10. 19. *Fear not O man greatly beloved:* Why complain you (O beleevers) for want of the *puddle drops* of the Creatures love? you have the *pure ſpring* of Chriſts love; what weakneſſe is it, to cry for want of the *light of the Stars*, ſo long as you have *th: light of the Sun?* Thou haſt the *Creators* love (beleever) be not ſad therefore in wanting the love of the *creature*; eſpecially conſidering, what a tranſcendent love it is. Comfort your ſelves (O my brethren) with theſe thoughts, Je-

ſus

ſus Chriſt loves you, and that love of his which he bears to you *paſſeth knowledge.*

2 Let this be a word of *Conviction* unto ſinners. Wretches, be ye convinced, that however you ſay no body regardeth Beleevers, yet there is one who is greater than all, who regards them, and that in a high manner; know, that Chriſt loves them with a tranſcendent love. *You break their ſouls in peeces, you ſlay them, and you murther them, and yet you ſay the Lord doth not ſee, neither doth the God of Iſrael regard it*, Pſal. 94. 7. But be convinced now to the contrary: The Lord Jeſus doth *ſee*, and he doth *regard* them; and ere long he will make you know, that (however you deal with them) they are dear unto him; though you love them not at all, yet he loves them highly. *Were you not afraid* (ſaith God) *to ſpeak againſt my ſervant* Moſes? *Num.* 12. 8. God wonders that they were not afraid to ſpeak againſt a man, whom he loved ſo much.

And

And who can chuſe but wonder, that ever any wretches ſhould be ſo vile, as to ſpeak, and act againſt thoſe, cruelly, whom Chriſt loves tranſcendently? But I pity yee (poor Creatures:) It may be you think that Chriſt ſlights them as you do; yet be convinced now, and take heed hereafter what you do; certainly whoever they bee, whom you oppoſe, if they be *beleevers*, be convinced, that the Lord Jeſus loveth them all with a tranſcendent love.

3 This Doctrin might be a *Counſellor*, and it counſels all to look after, and prize a part in the love of Chriſt, above all the loves of the world. O friends! why do you *ſpend your ſelves, and lay out your ſouls in the purſute of that which is not love*, at leaſt not *tranſcendent love*. I wiſh you would *now be wiſe*; you who *court* the creature, court them now no more: *I ſhew you a more excellent way of love*. Conſider the *tranſcendent* love of the Lord Jeſus, and be ye *counſelled*

selled to labour to get a share in it. O that the hearing of this, that Christ loveth beleevers with a transcendent love, might make you *sick* in your souls, till you participate of this love.

When one heard of the great love which was between two choyce friends, he said, *Ultinam tertius essem, i. e.* O that I were but a third, that I might share with them in their great love. Consider it, you have heard of the *high transcendent* love which is between Christ and beleevers; Be *on fire* therefore, and *burn* with desire, that you may partake of that love, and that at least you may enjoy that love, which those that have most, are not able to expresse, or conceive, it being a transcendent love, *passing knowledge.*

SER-

SERMON III.

EPHES. 3. *ver.* 19.

And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

WE are lanched out into the *great depth* of our *Saviours love*, wherein our souls may *swim* very sweetly; and although I can neither sound *ground*, nor see *shoar*, yet I am loath to desire to be from this *Sea*, for it were delight in the highest manner to be *drowned* here. The *love of Christ* is so surpassing *sweet in it self*, and so infinitely *necessary for our souls*, as that it is my desire (at least) to

make some further discovery of its transcendency.

You see what an *Hyperbole* the Apostle useth to express the greatness of Christs love by, *viz.* That *it passeth knowledge.*

The last time wee gave out the meaning of the expression, and entred upon the proof of it, in the prosecution of this point of Doctrine, *viz.*

That the love which Christ beareth to Beleevers, is a transcendent love.

This being the main thing which I eye in the Text, and indeed the main thing which every soul ought to eye, and live upon, I shall proceed further in the prosecution thereof.

All which I spake the last time, for the demonstration of the truth of the Doctrin, was but in a general way: I shall therefore now go on to demonstrate the love of Christ to be transcendent, from a brief survey of the course of his life.

Indeed Christs *Life* was (as it were)

were) but one great *act of love*, begun at his Birth, and carried on even to the time of his Death. If we follow this *Lamb*, in the whole tract of his Life, we shall see, that from his *Cradle*, unto his *Crosse*, the whole way was paved (as the bottom of *Salomons* Chariot was) with love.

There be three *Heads*, or demonstrations, which I shall now touch upon, that the transcendency of Christs love to Beleevers, may appear yet more full and glorious.

They are these:

1 *His Birth, and Incarnation.*

2 *His Life, and Conversation.*

3 *His Death, and Passion.*

Each of these seriously considered, will abundantly demonstrate the love of Christ to beleevers to be transcendent.

First, consider his *Birth and Incarnation*. How doth Christs love transcend in this act? The low condescension of Christ, in becoming *Man*, doth evidently de-

make some further discovery of its transcendency.

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clare the high transcendency of his love to beleevers. Had it not been great love in the Lord Jesus, to have taken upon him the *Angelical nature*? Sure it had. If Christ would have come into the World, with tidings of love, and life, he might have came as an *Angel of glory* (not as a *peece of clay*) and such a condescension as that had been much. But he *passed by the nature of Angels, and took upon him the nature of man*; that in this act he may declare love to beleevers. The Apostle tells us, that he *took not upon him the nature of Angels*, Heb. 2. 16. οὐ γὰρ δήπου *i.e.* in *no wise, at no hand*, would he take upon him the Angelical Nature, but he took upon him the seed of *Abraham*, to declare his love to the Children of *Abraham*. That we may see a little more clearly how the love of Christ doth transcend in his birth, I shall speak to this head in some particulars; and by all of them you shall see how Christs love unto beleevers did appear, and shine

glori-

gloriously in this act of his, when he became man, and was born for their sakes.

Here I shall consider therefore particularly (under this Head) these four things.

1 *Whence Christ came,*
2 *Where Christ came,*
3 *How Christ came,*
4 *Why Christ came,*
} when he was incarnate.

And out of all these you will see the transcendency of Christs love.

1 Consider *whence he came.* Christ was in the *bosome of the Father*, where hee lay, and lived in his Fathers love; hence he came to declare love to beleevers. *John* tells us, *hee came down from Heaven*, Joh. 6. 38. Jesus Christ from all eternity was in Heaven. There he had his Fathers company; There he enjoyed his Fathers love; There he was blessed in his Fathers bosome (for so the Scripture saith) he was εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός. *Joh.* 1. 18. He was living in the light of the Fathers love: And being with God, he solaced him-

ſelf in God. In that very light, and glory in which God himſelf was, in that ſame light and glory did Chriſt triumph: And yet from *this*, from *this* he came for beleevers ſakes. *He forgat* (as it were) *his Kindred, and Fathers houſe*, to bee born for beleevers. To undertake a long journey; and from a rare place, for any, doth declare much love to them; O how long a Journey did Chriſt undertake? and from what a *Paradiſe of pleaſure* did hee come unto beleevers, when he was born? Surely great was his affection, tranſcendent is his love, who came (at leaſt for a time) from the *houſe of Love* (his Fathers *boſome*) to open to Beleevers the *fountain of love*, (his own *boſome*.)

3 But *where did Chriſt come*, when he came from Heaven? was it into ſome *Goſhen*, ſome *land of light*? was it into ſome *Paradiſe*, ſome *land of life*? was it into ſome *Elyſium*, ſome *place of pleaſure*? Nothing leſſe. The place to which he came was

was *Ægypt*, where beleevers *sat in darkneſſe*; It was the *Wilderneſſe*, where beleevers were in the *ſhadow of death*; It was into this *World*, where nothing is but *vanity*, and *vexation*. Here it was, that Chriſt came for beleevers ſakes: And oh what tranſcendent love was it, that brought Chriſt here! His eyes ſaw, that his beloved ones were in a defiled place (which therefore could not be their *reſt*, as it is, *Micha.* 2. 10.) his love therefore prevailed with him to come here, to fetch his beloved hence. It was great love which *Ebedmelech* the *Æthiopian* ſhewed unto *Jeremiah*, when hee came to the brink of that filthy Dungeon, in which the Prophet was, and put down cords to draw him thence: But what great love had it been, if *Ebedmelech* had not only come to the *brink* of the *Dungeon*, but come down into the *Dungeon*, and not only *drew him up with ropes*; but *carried him up in his arms*? this had been love indeed. Why let me tell

you (beleevers) you were in this *World*, in a worser *Dungeon*, than *Jeremiah* was, in which you were ready to *dye* for hunger, and to be *drowned* in the *mire* thereof: And the Lord Jesus Christ came (when hee was born) not only to the *brink of the Dungeon* with cords to draw you up, but into the *Dungeon* it self, to take you up in his very *bosome*, and to bring you out from perishing here. *I came forth from the Father* (saith Christ) that was great love; but he addeth, *I came into the world*, Joh. 16.28. Here was love indeed: For Christ to come from Heaven (the *Fathers Throne*) into the world (*Satans Kingdom.*) For Christ to come from the *place in which glory shines* (Heaven,) unto a *place which lies in evil* (the world.) For Christ to come out from the *presence of the Father*, who always *smiled* upon him, and to come into the *place of men*, who ever *frowned* upon him: For him to come from thence, where he always heard the *Halle-*

lujahs

lujahs of Angels, to come here, where his ears were filled with the *revilings of sinners* בָּזוֹי! O the height, and the depth! O the breadth, and length! O the transcendency of Christs love to beleevers!

3 But *how came Christ here?* Came he in pomp with glory? Came hee with the sound of a Trumpet; that all might know, that though hee did come into a *cottage*, yet he was a *Prince*? No, but rather in a poor mean way. Indeed when Christ was born *an heavenly Hoast appeared, praising of God, and singing*: But that was rather; to discover unto the World, that the *Saints lover* was come into their Country, than any way to dignifie him, who indeed was *above all glory*. Some expound that place, *Isa.* 42. 12. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voyce to be heard in the streets, &c.* As if it did mean; that Christ should not carry the matter (about which he came) in an outward glorious manner, with pomp, but that in a silent way,

way, he should both come and do all that, unto which his Fathers love, and his own, did design him. And if you consider the History of his Nativity, you will say, that Christ came not with any *great show*; hee was born, not the *Son* of some great *Queen*, but the *Infant* of a poor *Virgin*: His reputed Father was not a *mighty Monarch*, but a mean *Carpenter*; This was it, with which he was twitted in the teeth, as disgraceful, *Is not this the Carpenters Son?* O how mean did Christ come into the World! when he was born in an Inne, and that happily none of the best (for there were not many Lodgings in it) and therefore his travelling Mother was fain to lye in the stable, and there was hee brought forth. And how did hee lye? when being *swadled* with some homely Cloaths, his Mother laid him in the *Cratch*. He that was wont to sit upon the *Throne* amidst the *Cherubims*, was content to bee found in the *Cratch* among *Brutes*.

Verily,

Verily, while we consider this, we must needs conclude, that Christs love was surpassing great, in that he would vouchsafe *to seem* (at least) yea, and in a *Human way*, to be so little, and to lye so low for your sakes. But,

4 Joyn to all these, *the end of Christs coming into the World*, and this will exceedingly heighten the demonstration, and evince, that indeed the love of Christ *passeth knowledge*. Why, for what did he come? upon what design came the *King of glory* from Heaven to Earth, in so mean a way? came he to take the *Crowns* off from the heads of *Kings*, and to put them upon his own? Indeed *Herod* feared this, but without ground; for Christ came for no such end. But the *end* for which he came was *love*. His design was to *declare*, & make known that love which lay *hid* from eternity (in his own, and Fathers bosome) unto beleevers. Therefore it was that he was born in time, *viz.* that beleevers might see,

see, and know that love which hee bare to them from before time.

I will in a word mention (omitting others) six particular ends for which Christ was born, and came into the world, and you will see them (like so many several *lines* in a Compass) meet all in *love*, as in their alone *center*.

1 The first end for which he was born was, *to redeem the precious souls of beleevers from that slavery in which they lay*; yea and their *bodies* also from that *vanity* unto which (with the rest of the Creatures) they were *subjected*. Christ saw his beloved, *Captives* in Sathans Kingdom, bound with *chains*, and made *slaves* unto his will; This sight went to his Soul, and his love could not contain it self, but he must come, that his beloved might bee set free. That this was the end of his Nativity, the Apostle witnesseth, *Gal.*4.4 *When* (saith he) *the fulnesse of time was come, God sent his Son* (and he

he readily came) *made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that wee might receive the adoption of sons.* You were once slaves (beleevers) and Christ was born that you might be sons; And a part of that adoption to which you were redeemed, is not only the redemption of your souls (though that bee the chief) but also, the *redemption of your bodies*, as it is clear, *Romans* 8. 23. This was the end why Christ was born, and I think I need not say, it was an end of love, for you cannot consider this, but you must confess that.

2 Another end which Christ aimed at in his Nativity, was to be fitted to suffer for Beleevers sakes. As Christ was God, and shined with the glory and Majesty of the Deity, buffetings, spittings, binding, &c. could not, durst not, take hold upon him; when he spake but that word, *I AM HEE*, the glory of his God-head shining through

through it as through a creviſe) it is ſaid, they that came to ſeize him, *went backward, and fell to the ground*, Joh. 18. 6. Chriſt knew, that as hee was God, he could not ſuffer, and yet a neceſſity he ſaw of ſuffering for beleevers ſakes; therefore he was contented to cloud the glory of his Deity, with the mantle of the ſeed of *Abraham*, that ſo he might be fitted to ſuffer for them. When *Codrus* ſaw that his death would profit his Country, and that while he had on his Imperial robes none durſt ſlay him, the Hiſtorian ſaith, *Depoſitis imperii inſignibus, famulārem cultum induit, &c.* i. e. *He laid aſide the royal robe, and put on an homely habit*, that he might be fit to dye in that diſguiſe. My beloved, the Lord Jeſus ſaw that the bloud of Bulls and Goats could not take away ſins; he ſaw alſo, that yet, if ever beleevers lived, it muſt be by bloud: And therefore, the Father having prepared him a body (as it is *Heb.* 10. 5.) his heart had this law

law of love written in it, that he took the Body, that thereby he might bee fit to bleed. Surely you are blind if you see not love in this end, viz. That Christ was born to be fit to dye.

3 A third end why he was born, was, that hee might bee like beleevers. Love tends to likenesse, Christ, because he loved, would bee born, that he might be like to them in all things, whom he loved above all things. *He was made* (saith the spirit) *in the likenesse of men*, Phil. 2. 7. He beheld his beloved in the form of servants, and he would bee born, that he might be in their form. Christ saw his dear ones, cloathed with the sackcloth of Human Nature (for that compared with the Angelical is but as hair to silk) and therefore stoopt to a Nativity, that he might be in the same fashion, and appear in the same suite. Though the Human Nature (especially cloathed with infirmities) were but a very mean array, yet his

his Divine love made him esteem it above the Angelical; Therefore passing by *the nature of Angels*, he took upon *him the nature of man*, and was born, that he might be like unto beleevers. Surely this was love. But,

4. Christ in his Nativity aimed at another end (as like, in love, the former as might be) and that was, *to unite himself more clearly and convincingly unto beleevers*. Union is an effect of affection, and love desires to unite. And if union be designed as the end of any act, we may safely say, Love was the Agent in that design. Christ indeed unites himself to Beleevers, by communicating unto them his own *Divine Nature*; but that hee might make the Union more firm, he was born to take upon him their *Human nature*. Beleevers, Christ is nearer united to you, than unto the Angels; his love to you did in this respect transcend his love to them; hee took not upon him their nature, and so

was

was not united to them that way; but he took upon him your nature, and was for this end born, that hee might be united to you this way. Say, is not this love? Yet

5 Christ had another end of love, for which hee was born, *viz. That he might be fitted in a more familiar manner to condescend to the capacities, yea, and to sympathize with the infirmities, of beleevers.* Christ desires *to converse* with them *sweetly*, and *to sympathize* with them seriously, neither of which he could so clearly do as God, therefore it was, he would be born *man*. As he was *God*, and had only the *divine nature*, beleevers were not able in so free a manner to converse with him: his glory was so amazing, that their weak eyes could not behold it; his Majesty was so overpowering, that their frail spirits could not converse with it; Hee was therefore pleased to take our nature, and be born; that they might converse familiarly with his

grace and not *dye*, who could not *behold* fully his *glory*, *and live*. Had Jesus Christ took upon him the nature of Angells, and so have come into the world unto his, alas, his presence (like that of the Angells) had been terrible! Beleevers could not have borne it. For this end therefore *the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us* (as 'tis *John* 1. 14.) That so we might *behold the glory of God, in the only begotten son*; the divine glory can now more safely bee contemplated by beleevers, while it is in the tent (that I may allude to the word *tabernacle*) of flesh; then it could bee by it self.

Now Beleevers may look upon the *luster of his Deity* more sweetly, while they can behold it as (it were) through the *love-hood of humanity*. Besides, Christ being born, he is now fitted to sympathize with the infirmities of his. *It behoved him* (saith the Holy ghost) *in all things to be made like* (and this is spoken of his be-

becomming man) *unto his Brethren, that hee might bee* ἐλεήμων: *i. e.* one that can ſhew tender mercy or pity, *Heb.*2.17. Chriſt by his being born, and ſo actually experiencing the infirmities of the humane nature, knows now the better how to ſympathize with *his*. Now tell me, is not this great love, that Jeſus Chriſt (who might (if he would) have ſolaced himſelf in the contemplation of his own glory, and never have ſtoopt to the ſence of our infirmities, yet that he) would be born, that ſo we might *behold his glory, and he might ſympathize with us*? he by his birth condeſcending to our capacities and making himſelfe ſenſible of our infirmities.

6 Adde to all theſe ends, this in the laſt place, *That Chriſt by his nativity hath raiſed our humane nature, the dignity of which was another end of it.* Oh! how might I ſhew the love of Chriſt to tranſcend in this end of his nativity! Certainly be-

leevers, Christ by uniting your nature to his own, did mightily dignifie it. How doth the humane nature shine in the luster of the divine? How doth the *peble* (mans nature) glister in the *golden* (I should say the glorious) *ring* of the *divine nature*? O the transcendency of Christ love, that hee would stoop so low, as to be born for this end, that thereby he might raise high the nature of his beloved ones, *i.e.* beleevers!

So that thus you see how the birth of Christ (throughly viewed) giveth a bright discovery of the transcendency of his love. Certainly, if you spiritually contemplate all that love which shines in the birth of the Lord Jesus, you will easily conclude, that his love to beleevers *passeth knowledge*.

The second head (from which I said I would demonstrate the transcendency of Christs love) was the *life of Christ*. And now a little

to

to ſpeak to this: you muſt not imagine, that I dare undertake the whole Hiſtory of his life, and demonſtrate his tranſcendent love from every Act thereof; No, this were too large a field to walk in. I ſhall hint ſomething in the generall of it, and then I ſhall in a more particular manner ſpeak to ſome remarkable paſſages thereof, all ſpeaking tranſcendent love to beleevers. *Generally, the life of Chriſt was a perfect myrrour of his love*: every action of it was full of love, and if wee put all the actions of his life together, we may conclude, that he was born, not ſo much to *live*, as to *love*. There was not a *word* which dropped from his lips, but it was full of love, and for his *works* which he did, they all ſpake love ſo loud, as that the deafeſt eare might hear it. So that we may ſay (as the Pſalmiſt in another caſe) *There is no ſpeech, nor language, where the voyce of his love was not heard, the line thereof went through every act of*

his life. Should we begin at the *Temple*, where he disputed with the Doctors, and follow him to the *mount*, where he was *crucified by the souldiers*, we should see all the way strewed with love-roses. And as there is no beam in the Sunne, in which there is no light; so there was no Act in the life of Christ, but to a spirituall eie, shines with the light of love. But (omitting others) I shall instance only in five particulars, and shew how Christ in the actions of his life, did declare the transcendency of his love.

1 *Jesus Christ did run for beleevers sakes through all the miseries of this life.* You cannot bee in any misery (*which is humane*) but Christ was in it for you, *to sweeten it unto you.* Art thou *hungry*? he was, *Mat.* 4, 3. Art thou *thirsty*? hee was: Art thou *weary*? hee was, *John* 4.6. Meetest thou with *scoffings, scornings, derisions, blasphemies, buffettings*, Why thy Lord Christ out of his transcendent

dent love) runned through all these in his life for thee. Beleevers, I beseech you mind it, when ever you meet with any of the miseries of this life, your beloved met with them for your sakes, and that for this end, that hee might sweeten them to your souls. And therefore when you meet with, and are pressed by the miseries of this life in any kind, then think upon your Saviours love, who lived a life sensible of these miseries, out of his love to you. And I doubt not but you will say, *O transcendent love!*

2 *The Lord Jesus submitted to all the duties of religion (which was not only to fulfill the righteousnes of the law) but to declare the infinitnes of his love:* for by it *beleevers may see, he requires of them at no time, more than he did himself.* The *yoak* of Christ, by this is made *smooth* and *easie.* Now his commandements will appear, not to be *grievous*, because hee did obey them first himself. There is no duty (O beleeving soul) un-

to which thou canst be called in the whole course of thy life, but thy Saviour in his life did the same. The child may well say, he hath a loving father, when as he can see him first doing that himself in his own person, which hee commands it to do. Your *everlasting Father* Jesus Christ (O ye *children of faith*) in his life went through (in his own person) all those performances which you are to do in Religion. And is not this transcendent love?

3 *Our Lord, in the whole course of his life, was ever carefull to provide and use all possible means for the strengthning of beleevers graces.* Knowledge & Faith, are the two great graces for the sweetning of the life of beleevers, and Christ was very carefull to strengthen them. Therefore it was that hee spake chiefly to those things which might strengthen these *graces*. For *knowledge*, how lovingly did hee speak that which his Disciples *were able to bear*? And

if

if he thought they did not well understand what he said, how lovingly did he *expound all things to them when they were alone?* as tis, *Mark* 4. 33,34. Yea when they asked him of any Parable, what its meaning might be, How lovingly did hee satisfie their desires, telling them, that it was their privilege, and to *them it was given to know the mysterys of the kingdome of God?* Luke 8. 9,10. nay, when Jesus had spoke any thing which they understood not, and did but *perceive their reasoning among themselves* about it, he did voluntarily (not being asked) inform them, as in that, *Mat.* 16.7,8,9. And for *faith*, its easie to observe how ready Christ was to strengthen it. Did he not rejoyce when he had an oportunity so to do? Mark that in *Joh.* 11. when *Lazarus was dead*, and hee knew how his raising of him would conduce to the confirming of their *faith*, hee professeth (speaking of it) that *he was glad for their sakes*, that hee was not there when he

he dyed, *to the intent they might beleeve*, verſ. 15. Now (my beloved,) what doth this care of Chriſt to ſtrengthen your graces declare, but the tranſcendency of his love to your ſouls?

4 *Jeſus Chriſt in his life aimed more at, and rejoyced more in Beleevers comforts than his own.* When he heard that great voyce from heaven, ſaying, *I have glorified it* (*i.e.* his name) and *I will glorifie it*; He ſaid, *This voice came not for his ſake, but for his Diſciples.* It ſeems his end in that requeſt (for that voyce was an anſwer to his prayer) was not his glory, but their good. And therefore, not rejoycing himſelf in the *excellent glory* of that voice from heaven, hee ſpeaks to them, and applies it to them, profeſſing it was for *their ſakes*, Joh. 12. 30. Hence it is alſo, that hee, when hee was to die, and *knew that his houre was come* (and ſo one would think ſhould have retired, and ſpent his time for himſelf) hee ſet himſelf to com-

fort

fort his Disciples, that in so doing, he might declare that having loved them, he loved them to the end with a transcendent love, Joh. 13. 1. Tell me (my beloved) should you see one going to the Stake, or Scaffold to dye, and should you observe him spend all his time, breath, and eloquence, in comforting some one dear beloved; would not you say his love did transcend, in making him forget himself, to comfort her? why so it was with your Saviour, There were but few houres ere he was to be taken, and to suffer. And yet, as if he minded (as indeed he did) the comfort of his Disciples more than his own, he improves all that time, and spent (as it were) all his eloquence upon them, labouring to silence their disparings, and sorrows, not minding his owne death, and sufferings. Oh transcendent love!

Lastly, it must be also minded, that *Jesus Christ being to pray to his Father* (the last action as it were of his

his life) *he in that prayer declared the transcendency of his love, by putting up more requests in the behalf of beleevers, than of himself.* You know the prayer in *Joh.* 17. And if you observe it, you shall finde, that albeit in the beginning he prayes for himself, in that (*Father the houre is come, glorifie thy Son*) yet having but (as it were) mentioned this in the 1 *vers.* and reiterated it in *vers.* 5. he doth (in a manner) shut himself out of all the rest of the prayer, and spendeth it wholly for beleevers. And oh what glorious things did he beg in their behalf! *That the Father would keep and preserve them,* ver. 15. *That he would down and sanctifie them,* ver. 10, 17. *That they might be one with the Father, as he was one,* ver. 21, 22. And in the close of all, how doth he intreat the Father, to *admit them to be ther where he was, and to behold his glory?* and how strongly doth he argue for this? doth he not use the cogent motive of love? *for thou lovest me,* ver. 24. As if he should say,

Father

Father, I know thou loveſt me, thou didſt ſo before ever the world was; now I beſeech thee, by that love, as if ever thou wouldeſt declare that thou doſt love me, own, preſerve, ſanctifie, make one with thy ſelf, mine, as I am (for this is the argument to the whole prayer) and *let them, whom I loved in the world, bee with me when they leave the world: O Father, as thou loveſt me, hear, grant this* (as my laſt) *requeſt for my beloved ones.* Tell me now, how tranſcendent is Chriſts love? and how near do beleevers lye to his boſome? who being now (as it were) to pray and dye, forgets himſelf, and breaths out his laſt requeſts in ſo many, ſo tranſcendent particulars in their behalfs.

Thus you ſee how eaſie it is to runne through the life of Chriſt, and yet running, to read all along tranſcendent love to beleevers. But I muſt now ſpeak a word to the *death of Chriſt*, and you ſhall ſee this alſo as *lively* demonſtrating (as either, or both the other branches) the

the truth of the point, *viz.* That the *love of Christ to beleevers passeth knowledge.*

The third head of demonstrations being the *death of Christ*, I shall speak to it a little distinctly, though briefly.

But where shall we begin his passion? and at what part of it shall we enter upon this demonstration? shall we goe with him into the *Garden* (indeed there it began) or shall wee ascend *Mount Calvary* (how upon it, it ended) or shall we speak of what he suffered in the *high Priests hall*? I think it not amisse to mention each.

To begin therefore at the *Garden* in which Christ was taken. O how transcendently sweet is the *smell* of his love here!

Beleevers look upon your Saviour in the Garden; See him, when his soul *began to be sorrowfull and very heavy*, and listen a little to what he saith, *My soule is exceeding sorrowfull, even unto the death*, Matth. 26. 38.

you

you experienced Saints! Tell mee, what manner of love is this: For your Lord to be ſad unto the death, that he might remove thoſe clouds, which have ſometimes kept your ſoules in the *ſhadows of death and darkneſſe*? But go on and liſten to your Lords cry to the father, once, & again, when he begged that the *cup might paſſe from him*: Surely the *wrath in the bottom of the cup* was very bitter (which made him deſire to be delivered from it:) But as ſurely the *love in Chriſts boſome* was very *ſweet*, which yet prevaileth with him, to ſubmit his *will* to the Fathers, and to *drink it up* for your ſake. Did you hear ever of *ſweating* in a *cold night*, and that upon the *cold ground*, in an *open Garden*? Surely you will ſay hee muſt be *hot within*, that can, or could do ſo. Why the *heat* of your Saviours *love* was ſuch, as that it ſupported him to bear the *heat* of Gods *wrath*, that as *cold* as the *night* was (and twas a winters night as is rationally conjectured)

conjectured.) and as open as the place was (*a garden*) yet then, and there, he did sweat, and that clods of blood (his veines issuing out freely, and the air congeling it presently) and this, in the beginning of his sufferings, beleevers, for your sakes. I presume you are not blind (and yet certainly you are) if you cannot read matchlesse love in this. Some have been so weak (reports reiterated tell us so) as to write letters to their beloved with their blood: If it be true, you will say it is much (and Ile say, 'twas mad) But yet let me tell you, its no simple tale, but a sweet truth, *Christ in the garden bled enough to write a large letter of love to you.* And if you read spiritually, you'l read such love, as yet, when you read, you cannot expres it, while you read the story of Christs agony in the garden. The greatnesse of *Adams folly* is not so legible in his *eating the forbidden fruit in the garden* (which was the shutting of us out of

of paradiſe) As the *tranſcendency of Chriſts love, is in his agony in the garden* (which was to re-inſtate beleevers in a happyer ſtate than Paradiſe was, or could bee.)

But lets follow our Lord, from the *garden* to the *High Prieſts hall*, and here, let's hear a little the *hideous out-cryes of the rude rabble againſt him.* Ah Lord! what was that ſtopped our Saviours ears, ſo that hee would not regard? and ſilenced his tongue, that hee would not reply? was't not love? when you read, how ſome *ſpit upon*, and others *railed* at Chriſt; How *ſome blaſphemed him*, and others *buffetted him*; how many *ſcoffed*, how many *ſcorned*, how many *accuſed*, how all *cryed out againſt him*? I ſay, when you read this, cannot you as ſweetly read the *tranſcendent love* of Chriſt to you, as the *tranſcendent malice* of the Jews againſt Chriſt?

But not to ſtay here, goe out with Chriſt to *Calvary*. (As hee aſcends the Mount, doth not the de-

monstration afeend too?) See him *nailed to the Crosse, for your sakes*, and tell mee, if that sight doth not clear this truth (*as a nail fastened by the masters of assemblies*, such as *Paul* was) *viz.* That the love of Christ *passeth knowledge*. Surely, beleevers, *Christs hanging on the Crosse*, and then *breathing out his last breath*, and *powreing out his hearts blood*, in a *shamefull*, *cursed*, and *tormenting way*, for your sakes, is enough to make you [*cry*] out, *O the depth of his love!* 'Twas well said by one, *that Mount Calvary, was Loves Academy*: and he is worse than a *Dunce*, that cannot learn the transcendency of Christs love to beleevers here.

The blood of the Crosse speaks love in strength, and no such Sermon of love in the Bible, nor in the Creation, as the blood of the Crosse, saith a fine pen. Greater love than this hath no [*man*] *that a man lay down his life for his friends*, *Joh.* 15.13. Indeed, *man* hath no greater (nay scarce so great a love as that:) But Jesus Christ had

had, and ſhewed as great, (nay a far greater love than this) for hee laid down his life for his *foes* (ſuch, beleevers, you were.) 'Twas but a *brag of Peter* (his words were greater than his love) when hee ſaid, hee would *dye for Chriſt*: But 'twas a *reality* in Chriſt, when ſpeaking of the baptiſm of his death, hee ſaid, *How am I ſtreightened till it bee accompliſhed?*

Certainly it was *large love*, that *ſtreightened* his ſoul, till he taſted of death for you. The Scriptures record it, as the character of the tranſcendency of the Martyrs love to Chriſt, that they loved *not their lives unto the death* for his ſake: But alas, their death for Chriſt was but their duty (they were bound to it, becauſe Chriſt loved them;) Whereas Chriſts love to us is *grace*, for *hee loved us firſt*. Ask a condemned Malefactour, what if the Prince's Son ſhould go to his father and ſay, *Father, I confeſſe the wretch is deſervedly to dye, but I ſee a willing-*

neſſe in thee, that hee ſhould live; only I perceive it ſticks with thy Juſtice: Thou wouldeſt magnifie thy mercy in his pardon, couldeſt thou alſo ſatisfie thy juſtice: why? for that Father here I am, and I will dye my ſelf to ſatisfie thy juſtice, onely let the poor wretch live, to the glory of thine, and my free grace; and having thus ſaid, ſhould goe to the place of execution, and *dye indeed*: Ask (I ſay) the Malefactor, what kind of love hee counts, and calls this? Beleevers, ask your own hearts (for you were the Malefactors) and tell mee, what word is great enough to expreſſe the great love of Jeſus Chriſt, which hee lively expreſſed to you, in his death for you? Surely you will ſay, the *thought* of the love is too *big* for your mouth, you cannot through your *narrow expreſſions*, let out your large conceptions, of Chriſts love in his death.

I muſt profeſſe, if you can, I cannot: This head of demonſtration, is fitter for *meditation*, than *expreſſion*.

expreſſion. And yet when wee have meditated the moſt of it, wee ſhall never bee able to reach the height of it. The thoughts of Chriſts life are ſwallowed up by the thoughts of his *death*; His death doth ſet out his love moſt to the *life*. I will wind up this head with this concluſion; You are no Scholars *in Chriſts School*, if you cannot read a *large* and *long lecture* of love upon Chriſts *Croſſe*. Let it paſſe as an *aphoriſm*, *The love of Chriſt, expreſſed in his death, tranſcends ſo high above our thoughts, that wee ſhall never bee able to come to the height thereof, all our life.* His love *tranſcends our expreſſions, confounds our conceptions:* yet it muſt be believed and applyed.

At preſent, I ſhall offer but three words, to help you in the application of the tranſcendency of Chriſts love to beleevers,

Firſt, *ſtand and wonder* (O beleeving ſoules) *at this love*; Indeed it's fitter for *wonder* than *words*: Think upon this that I have ſaid, and let

your thoughts dwell upon the meditations hereof; and when in *the working of your thoughts*, you have ascended to some *height*, then, in the *wonderment of your soules*, cry out, O the *depth* of the love of Christ, which *passeth knowledge!* Wonder and say, *Lord Jesus, what is man (by sin the worst of creatures) and what am I (by unbelief the worst of men) that thou shouldest thus minde me, as to bee born for me, to live, yea to [dye] to declare love to me!* O that you would *live*, and *lose your selves* in the thoughts of your Saviours love! And when you have *lost* your selves (*which you may interpret found your soules*) in the bottomlesse gulf of your Lords love; then recover your spirits again, and cry out, *Oh the dazling heights! Oh the confounding* (yet comfortable) *depths!* *Oh the divine* (yet immensurable) *dimensions* of the love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge!*

2 *Lament! O lament* (beleevers) *when you consider, that notwithstanding*

Christ

Chriſt doth thus love you, yet you are too too apt to neglect the conſideration thereof, and too too poor in it's requitall. That holy man (Mr. *Welch*) wept, *becauſe he ſaw his heart ſo dull, that hee could not conſider the love of Chriſt as he ſhould, and would.* And truly, who can with a dry eye conſider, the neglect of the thought of the tranſcendent love of Chriſt? what O ſoul, doth Chriſt love thee much, and doſt thou think on it but little? Canſt thou ſpend daies and weeks in reading the *fond fancies of feigned loves*? And haſt not thou an houre to meditate on the *real royall love of the Lord Jeſus*? And as thou *mindeſt* it but *ſeldome*, ſo thou *requiteſt* it but *ſorrily*. What *ſmall returns* of love, hath Chriſt had from thee, for this *vaſt expence* of love upon thee? He loves us *richly*; but, alas, we love him *poorly*. His love *paſſeth knowledge*, none can underſtand it; and our love in a ſad ſenſe, *paſſeth knowledge* too, for none can perceive it. How little,

alas, do wee, will wee forsake for Christ? (And yet hee forsook much for us.)

Hee forsook *Heaven*, and came into the world for us; and wee will not forsake *earth* (although it be to goe to *Heaven*) for him; hee did *much* for us (and counted it but little) hee liv'd from first to last for us; but wee doe but *little* for him, and yet wee count it much, grudging to give him the last and least, though Satan hath had the first, and most part of our life. Hee, as you have heard, *suffered* for us even *death* it self; but which of us is willing to *taste of suffering* for him? True, *some* have said, *If they had a thousand heads, they would lose them all for Christ*; yet these *some* are but *few*: For who of us would lose *one head* for him? *Ignatius* (in former times) said, hee was willing to endure *fire*, *crosse*, *butcheries*, and all for Christ; but these are the latter dayes, and though his love was *hot*, ours is grown *cold*; wee can scarce

ſcarce endure a word, a *jeer*, a *ſcoff* for Chriſt. Well, I beſeech you *ſir*, and *ſigh*, and ſay, *Oh! how meanly do we requite the love of Chriſt! He was born, lived, died out of love to us: But we are ſo far from dying for Chriſt, that we ſcarce are willing to live to Jeſus Chriſt.*

Thirdly, in as much as Chriſt thus loves you (O beleevers) with a tranſcendent love, *Be you ſatisfied herewith*, and be *content* (if it muſt be ſo) *to want the love of men.* Its a ſhame that any who are the beloved of Chriſt, ſhould mourn for not being loved of the creature. Why ſhould the *Kings daughter, who hath* (or at leaſt ſhould) *forget her kindred, and her fathers houſe*, Why (I ſay) ſhould ſhe (*i.e.* the *beleeving ſoul*) weep, becauſe the *ſcullion* ſcorns her, when the King himſelf embraceth her? Its but meet that you ſhould reſt ſatisfied in the love of Chriſt, ſith its ſo tranſcendent. Wherefore, *drink waters out of thine own ciſtern* (O Chriſtian) and (as *Solomon* ſaith) *rejoyce with the wife* (or

(or rather with Christ the *husband*) *of thy youth: let him be as the loving Hinde and pleasant Roe; let his breasts satisfy thee at all times.* Do not *erre*, in *mourning* for the want, or *hunting* after the enjoyment of creature-love; but *erre alwaies*, or (as wee render it) *be ravished alwaies with his love.* Bathe thy self (Oh beleever) alwaies in Christs bosome; live upon, and be contented with his love: Let others *sip*, and *drink* (if they'l be so weak) of the *puddle waters* of the *creatures love*; while thou, as wise, neither *envieſt*, nor *desireſt to partake with them.* Surely did you but remember this, that *the love of Christ* (towards you) *passeth knowledge*, you would not be discontented at the want of the love of any, or all the creatures; considering therefore that it is such, be you contented with it. Its a sign that the love of Christ *passeth thy knowledge*, in the transcendent worth thereof, If in the midst of the absence of all other loves, thou canst be content and satisfied with this.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

EPHES. 3. *ver.* 19.

And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

WEE are yet upon the consideration of the *transcendency of Christs love to Beleevers* (And oh how sweet is it to lose our selves in this consideration!) How loath am I to leave a point of such infinite necessity and sweetnesse? How gladly could I, not only *live*, but *die* in the declaration of the love of Christ to beleevers? I doubt not but the very mention of the point, *That the love of Christ*

Christ to beleevers is a transcendent love, maketh the hearts of you to leap for joy. Tell me (O beleever) couldest thou not wish to have thine eares ever followed with this sound? *That Christ loveth thee with a love passing knowledge.* Something we have already hinted, and something more wee shall adde at this time; yet because when I have said all that I can about the transcendency of Christs love to beleevers, I shall come many thousand steps short of its height, I am resolved to say all that I intend to this point, at this time.

Therefore a little more to demonstrate this, *That the love of Christ passeth knowledge*, I shall intreat you to view

First, *His command over them.*
Secondly, *His care for them.*
Thirdly, *His endeavour, not only to declare to, but to perswade beleevers of this love.*

Christs Commands speak love

First, If we do consider the *command which Christ exerciseth* over *beleevers*,

ers, we ſhall ſee the tranſcendency of his affection even in that. It is Chriſts *glory*, that he is the *King of the Saints* (in a peculiar manner) and it is his *grace*, that he exerciſeth that Kingly power in a ſweet way. How ever *he ruleth the Nation with a rod of iron*, yet he ruleth the Saints with a *golden Scepter*. Hence it is, that although in wrath, his iron rod *break the Nations in peeces*, yet his golden Scepter is ſtill ſtretched out in love, to entertain the Saints. You read in *Cant.* 3. that *Solomon made a Chariot of the wood of Lebanon, he made the pillars thereof of ſilver, the bottome of gold, the covering of it of purple, the middeſt being* [*PAVED WITH LOVE*] *Cant.* 3. *v.* 10. That Chariot which *Solomon* made for himſelf, and in which hee rode, might well ſet out the Chariot in which Chriſt rideth up and down the *world of beleevers*, whom he governs. Indeed it is very glorious, and it glitters with beams of light, but withall it is very gracious, as being

being *paved with stones of love*; Love is the *throne* in which he sits, love is the *Scepter* with which hee ruleth, and all his government is managed in such a way, as that beleevers may say, that he is the Lord of love even in his ruling of them. *Absolom* did but flatter, when hee stood by the way of the gate, and *kissed all that passed by*; and by it insinuated how sweetly hee would govern, if he came to the Kingdome; but that which was *flattery* in *Absolom*, is *reality* in Christ; When any of the spirituall pilgrims come (as beleevers do) to do him obeysance (as they ought to doe, being under his commands) hee putteth forth his hands, and taketh them, and kisseth them, and doth not only promise, but perform transcendent love in all his commands over them. But to read this more particularly, you will see the transcendency of Christs love discovered in his command over beleevers, if you consider three things.

First

First, *Christ layeth no commands upon beleevers, but such as are full of love & sweetneſſe.* He reduceth all the Decalogue to theſe two heads, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind: and thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*, Mat. 22.37.39. Well might *John* ſay, *That his Commandements are not grievous*, 1 Joh. 5.3. (the word is butthenſome) and indeed what burthen is there in the commands of Chriſt, unleſſe love be a burden? Indeed he might have commanded (*which is his peculiar Prerogative*) what he *pleaſed*, but he commanded nothing but what is *pleaſant* in it ſelf, and will be ſo to a ſanctified ſoul (which is the tranſcendency of his love) *A new Commandement* (ſaith he) *do I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another*, Joh. 13. *v.* 34. Well may the Commandement be called *New*, it being ſuch as was never given by any King beſides himſelf: And ſurely there

βαρεῖαι, from βάρος a weight.

was

was great love in his *bosome* to beleevers, when hee only laid a burthen, or a command of Love upon their *shoulders. All her ways are ways of pleasantnes*, Prov. 3. 17. The waies of Christ (which are his Commands) are waies of pleasantnesse (for I take it, that *Solomon* there by wisdome understandeth Christ.) Beleevers, if you could but *live in love*, you would *fulfill the Law* of your Lord; for hee being a Lord of love to you, *Love is the fulfilling of the Law* he layeth upon you. Yea such is the transcendency of his love to beleevers, that *hee layeth no Commandement upon them, to do any thing, which hee did not himself.* Flesh and Blood may think it a hard, and a harsh Command, to wash the feet of a poor beleever, a fellow servant: But grace will see the Command to be sweet, and lovely, (and Jesus Christ to be *loving* in laying this Command) because it is no other than what himself hath done before;

The word is נעם which it used for the pleasantnesse of a life of love. 2 Sam. 1 26.

fore: Ask the ſervant whether his Lord be loving, who layeth no Commandement upon him, but that which is ſweet in its ſelf, and ſweet in its fruit, and no worſe than his Lord himſelf will undertake. Beleevers, it is your caſe, all the Commands of your Lord Chriſt are ſweet in themſelves, and ſweet in their fruit; and they are ſuch as he himſelf (while hee lived) ſtooped unto. Doth not this declare tranſcendent love?

Secondly, *Chriſt layeth all his commands in a way of love*, that which he biddeth beleevers do (who are under his command) it is in a loving way: As the command is, ſo is the manner of its impoſing, *i. e.* ſweet and loving. It is poſſible, that a ſweet thing may be injoyned in a harſh way: An eaſie commandement in it ſelf may be burthenſome in the way of its impoſall. To command with a *bended fiſt*, and a *frowning forehead*, is not to command in a loving way: but now Jeſus

Christ, when ever he commandeth, hee commandeth sweetly, and smilingly: *he doth not lift up his voyce, and cry* (as some understand that place) *Esa.* 42. *v.* 2. Hee doth not *speak in an austere, rough, rugged manner*: But as the Lord is, so is his *language, loving*. Observe with what love he layeth his commands on beleevers; *You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you*, Joh. 15 14. He doth not threaten, and say, I will be your *Foe*, if you will not obey; but if you do, you shall bee my *Friends*. And so again, *If you love me, keep my Commandements*. It is worth the noting, that *grace* may be said to come in this respect by Christ: He gave not his *Law* (as *Moses* did) with *thundring and lightning*, in a dreadfull manner; But he gave the Law to his Disciples himself, in a sweet and loving way. Hee beginneth his Sermons, with *Blessed are ye*: And all his commands drop from him like the *drops of dew upon the tender grasse*, He shall come down (saith

(saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 72. *v.* 6.) *like rain upon the mown grasse, as showers that water the earth, i. e.* Hee shall come down, both softly and sweetly; this is spoke of Christs comming as a King; so that you may see the transcendency of Christs love unto you, in the manner in which hee layeth his Commandements on you.

Thirdly, *Consider the end that Christ doth aim at in all his Commandements*, and that will also discover the transcendency of his love to beleevers. Hee seeks not himself, but them, in all his Commands. Hee biddeth the beleever *work*, not that he may *reap* any thing himself, but that the beleever may *get all*; hee putteth them to *labour in his Vineyard*, that they may have all the *harvest*. As it is inconsistent with his *Deity*, to have any thing added to him, so also it is inconsistent with his *love*; Hee putteth his servants to *reap*, that they may have all the *corn*; and hee setteth them to

work, rather that he may *give them wages*, than that himself shall *get* any thing by their workings. *Take my yoke upon you* (saith hee) *and you shall finde rest unto your soules*. Christ layeth a yoke upon their necks, not to *burthen* them, but to *ease* them; not to *break* their *backs*, but to *refresh* their *bosomes*. Many Kings, and Rulers, aim at themselves in their commands, and they seek too too often, rather their own greatnesse, than their Subjects good. But (beleeve it) Jesus Christ *your King*, is not such an one; All that he aims at in his government is your good: The end of his Commandements are your comfort; As his government increaseth over you, so his *peace* increaseth in you: This is the effect, and fruit of all his Commandements, not so much that others may take notice of his *glory in commanding*, as that you may find his *grace in obeying*. Indeed, love is the work and wages of his Commandement; hee therefore bids you do so,

ſo, that he may love you; therefore it is, that though you are frail, and weak, and cannot obey, hee will be kind to love you, notwithſtanding all.

So that now the Commands of Chriſt, being as it were love *materially* (in the *ſubſtance*) and love *formally* (in their *impoſals*) and love *finally* (in their *aim*) what can you conclude from all this, but that the love of Chriſt, even to beleevers, is declared to be tranſcendent in the exerciſe of his command over them?

Chriſts care ſpeaks love.

Secondly, conſider *the care that Chriſt hath of them.* O the tranſcendent love that Chriſt expreſſeth to beleevers, in the care that hee taketh of them for all neceſſities! He is not only a *Lord* to *command*, and to ſet them on work; but he is a *Father to take care*, and provide for his. And it is eaſie to obſerve tranſcendency of love, in the tranſcendent care that Chriſt hath to provide for his. *Food*, and *rayment*, and *lodging*, are the

least things that can be taken care for; and yet you shall see Christ doth not only take care for them, but he doth take care for other things also; yea, and as he doth take care that beleevers have *food* to eat, so it is of the finest (*the kidnys of the wheat*, and the finest flower;) Rayment, and glorious rayment, a *house*, & a brave one too. First, *Christ taketh care that beleevers may have food to eat.* Hee knoweth they must have bread, and therefore hee hath provided *bread of life*; hee knoweth they must have drink, and therefore hee hath *opened the sealed fountain of the water of life.* The care that God hath to feed his people in the Wildernesse, did demonstrate his love unto them, that he gave them *quails* and *mannah*, *&c.* Beleevers, while you are in the *wildernesse of this world*, your Lord hath declared his love, in making rich provisions of *spiritual food* for you: Hee hath prepared the *hidden mannah* which hee will give unto you; *A feast of fat things, full of marrow, of wine*

wine on the Lees, well refined, as it is *Esay*. 25.6. Nay, even in the *midst of your enemies he hath prepared a table for you*: And not only that you may be sure of *food*, but that the *food* might be surpassingly *sweet*, Hee hath made *himself to be meat for you*. If it be true, that the *Pelican feedeth her young ones with her own blood*; then that *Bird* may be a *type* of your *beloved*: His flesh is *meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*; and this doth hee give for the life of your souls (O beleevers.) *Cleopatra*, that shee might outvie *Marke Antonies* love, caused (as the History relateth) a *pearl* of great price to be *dissolved*, that he might *drink* thereof: Christ, beleevers, hath done more for you, and hath *outvied her* love to him; *Gold*, and *silver*, & *pearls*, are but *corruptible things*, in comparison of this precious blood, and yet that blood he hath prepared for beleevers to drink, that they might live for ever.

Secondly, *Christ hath provided not only food for the belly, but rayment for*

the back too. And as the *food*, so also the *rayment* do transcend in love. Psal. 45. 14. *A garment of needle-work, rich, and costly attire*, Christ hath provided for beleevers: When thou wast *naked*, (beleever) and hadst no cloaths to cover thee, but the *filthy rags of thine own works* (which did defile thee) *then*, Ezek. 16. 10, 11, 12, 13. even *then he cloathed thee in broidered work, and shod thee with badgers skins, and covered thee with fine linnen, and decked thee with ornaments, and put bracelets on thine hands, and a chain on thy neck, & a jewel on thy forehead, & ear-rings on thine ears, & a beautifull Crown upon thine head; &c.* Thus did he adorn thee, and thus did he array thee, and *thou wast exceeding glorious with the garments he put on thee.* Greater love can none declare than this, to give another as good garments as himself doth wear; why, this doth Jesus Christ. In the mount of Transfiguration, (*Matth.* 17. *v.* 2.) it is said, *his rayment was as white as the light*: And when the Saints appeared to *John* in his vision,

ſion, they appeared in garments of the ſame colour; it is ſaid, They were *arrayed with white robes*, Rev. 7 13. Righteouſneſſe is his garment, and ſo it is beleevers too. It was an act of great love to *Mordecay* (and *Haman* thought the King could expreſſe no greater) that the *Royal apparrel ſhould be brought which the King uſed to wear*, and to be put on him. Why, beleevers, ſuch is the tranſcendent love of Chriſt to his, in *his* care for your apparrel, that the *royal apparrel which he weareth himſelf* is brought to you, and is put on your ſouls *Now* (and you are *all glorious within* here,) and it ſhall be put on your bodies *hereafter*; even that body which is now *vile*, *ſhall be made glorious*, *like to his glorious body*: And when Chriſt ſhall come, and appear in his garments of glory, you *ſhall appear with him in the like*: And then he ſhall be *admired*, not only in himſelf, but *in you*. O tranſcendent love, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould provide ſuch cloathing

Phil. 3. laſt

Col 3. 4. 1 Joh. 3. 3.

2 Theſ. 1. 10.

ing for us poor creatures!

Thirdly, *as for lodging*, Christ hath provided thatlikewise for beleevers. Indeed himself had no house here on earth (not so much as a hole wherein to lay his head) and therfore beleevers fare no worser *here* than he did, they have as good a lodging as their Lord: In *this world* indeed they have not a house to be in, nor a bed to lye on (as their own;) But as to *hereafter* he hath provided a *house*, and that not a *mean* one, but a *mansion house*, and the building thereof is brave; It is a *building of God*, and the bravery of it appeareth in this (which was the bravery of Christs body, *Heb.*9.11.) that it is a *house not made with hands*. The *Shunamite* did declare her love to the *man of God*, by making of him *a little chamber*, and by setting a *bed* therein, and *a table*, and *a stoole*, and *a candlestick* for him, 2 King.4.10. Jesus Christ sheweth greater love than this, in having provided a better room for beleevers; not a *little Chamber*, but a *great Mansion* (a

bed

bed of glory, *Abrahams* bosome) not a *stool*, but a *Throne*, not a *candlestick* (no nor the Sunne) but *himself*, to be as *a light*, this not *on the wall* (as it were without his own Palace) but even *within*, where himself is, in his own presence, *Joh.* 17. 24. *Father* (saith he) *I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.* Consider this, beleevers; Christ hath prepared as good a house for you, as for himself, and when he was, as it were, in the entry thereof, he stood at the door, and did in a manner agree with the *Father* before hand, that you should come in as well as himself: and therefore it was, (he said) he went to *prepare a place for them.*

So that now here is rich provision of necessaries, *food*, and *rayment*, and *lodging*: And what doth this declare, but rich love in Christ, that he should take such care of beleevers?

Wee might adde, not onely that Christ hath prepared these things which

which are the *necessaries*, but hee hath prepared other things which are *glorious*. But oh, who shall bee able to declare all the gracious provision which Christ hath made for his! When as *eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, nor hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive those things*; we will therefore break out with the Psalmist, *O how great is thy goodnesse, which thou hast laid up as a secret treasure* (for so the word signifieth) *for them that love thee*, and beleeve in thee, *Psal.* 31. 19. Thus you see the transcendent love of Christ in his *care for*, as well as his *command over* beleevers.

צָפַן
To hide as a treasure hence
צְפוֹן
a treasure.

Thirdly, and lastly, we might abundantly demonstrate the transcendency of Christs love to beleevers, *in his indeavour to declare and perswade the hearts of beleevers of all this love*. That Christ should love at all, and love so much is transcendent; But that he should take paines to perswade the hearts of beleevers to beleeve this, is an *addition to the tran-*

Christs endeavour to perswade beleevers of his love, speaks its greatnesse.

transcendency of the love. Christ saw how *backward* we would be to *beleeve*, and how hardly we would be brought to perswade our selves, that indeed he did love us at all; therefore it is, he took such care, and made such provision, for the perswading of the hearts of beleevers to close with the truth of this, that he loved them. *I have* (saith he) *declared thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.* This is the great work which he did himself, when he was on earth, and which his Ambassadors now doe in his name (now he is in Heaven) viz. *To perswade the hearts of his that he loveth them.* What a great deal of love was there in that cry of his, when he was on earth, *That if any came to him, he would in no wise cast them out?* And if they did but *thirst*, they might *come* to him, and *drink*? How did he declare the strength of his love, in perswading soules to come to him, that they might *taste*, and

and *see* how he loved them. It had been much, if Jesus Christ would *have given a poor soul leave to love him*, and would have accepted it upon his seeking to him, but that he should *love*, and *woo* us to *love him*, and *take paines* to make us *beleeve that he doth love us*, This is transcendent love! O beleevers, such is the strength and transcendency of the love of Christ towards you, that when he was upon earth himself, he made it his great work, not onely to *tender* love *freely*, but to *perswade you* to beleeve it *fully*. And now he is gone to Heaven, he hath taken care to appoint *Ambassadors*, and they alwayes in his name doe *beseech* you to beleeve, that he doth love you: And it is the great longing of his soul, to fill you, not onely with his own love, but with his Fathers love too, wheresoever the Gospell of free grace doth sound, the summe thereof is this, *That God so loved the world, that hee sent his Son: And that Jesus Christ himself*

ſelf ſo loved poor ſoules, that he came himſelf, that if any would but beleeve, they might have him, and in him everlaſting life and love.

To all this I might adde the conſideration of the *eaſie price* that Jeſus Chriſt ſetteth upon his love, which he tendereth; It is but *acceptation.* If any man will but *come* to (his boſome) the fountain of love, he may take *the waters thereof freely*; that fountain is not a *ſealed*, but an *open fountain*: And this is the tranſcendency thereof, that it is *open*, even for thoſe, in whom there was a *fountain of wrath* and enmity flowing up, and that againſt himſelf. O my brethren! if you did but conſider, that the love of Chriſt *paſſeth knowledge*, that in its nature, it is every way *full*, and in its tender *free*; And that he profereth *rich love* to thoſe, who by nature were the *children of wrath*, and that all this is in a *beſeeching way*; Certainly you muſt conclude, that the love of Chriſt is a tranſcendent love, and

that

that it passeth knowledge. It was the tenderneſſe of the love of *Jonathan*, and *David*, that it passed the *love of women*; *Thy love to me* (saith *David*) *was wonderfull, passing the love of women*, 2 Sam. 1. *v.* 26. Surely, beleevers, the love of Christ to you is *wonderfull* (transcendently wonderfull) *passing the love of women* (passing the love of *Jonathan* and *David*) *comprehending* (as formerly hath been hinted) yea and *surmounting any*, or *all the loves of all the creatures whatsoever*: Neither man, nor Angels could, or ever did, expresse so much love, as Jesus Christ hath not *onely expressed*, and declared, *but doth even tender, and beseech*, beleeving soules to accept of. I shall adde no more for the demonstration thereof, but onely this; That when I have said all that I can (though I had all the tongues both of Men and Angels) of the love of Christ, you that finde it in your bosomes, will have reason to tell me, that the one half was not told you: For the love of Christ

Christ is such, as all the Saints, who do in the fullest measure injoy it, are not able to expresse it, but must be fain to cease speaking, and so wrap up their soules in wondring at it, and cry, That it is a *love passing knowledge.*

Before I come to the Application, I shall briefly answer two Objections which may come in, and be made against the truth of this Doctrine.

Ob. First, it will be *objected*, If the love of Christ be so transcendent to beleevers, *Whence then cometh it to passe, that he permits them oftentimes to lye so low, that their enemies triumph, and insult over them?* Surely will some weak (*for weaknesse is the ground of the Objection*) beleever say, If Christ love me so highly, why doth he permit me to lye so low? If I be so neat to his heart, how is it that he suffereth wicked men to tread upon me? If he layeth me in his bosome, why is it that he suffereth me to lye at the worlds feet?

Answ. 1. *This may consist with love*; tell me (*thou weak soul*) was not Christ the *dearly beloved* of the Father; and yet did not the father permit wicked men to persecute him? Canst thou be *reviled, buffeted scourged, or crucified worse than he?* & yet notwithstanding all, he was *beloved of the Father*, and that in a transcendent manner: in like manner, thou mayest be the *beloved of Christs soul*, and yet be delivered into the *hands of thine enemies* (as it is) *Jer.* 12.7. Nay, this is not onely consisting with love, but

2 *It is an act of love*; for while Christ permits these sufferings of thine, hee maketh thee like unto himself. It is desired of *Paul*, as it makes him conformable unto Christ, *Phil.* 3. 10. *Even a mourning garment is glorious when it is the same that Christ weareth.* What soul is there that may not, as it were, be proud, and *glory in its tribulations* (as the word signifieth, *Rom* 5.3. (when he considereth *in them he is made like*

Καυχώμεθα. i.e. We boast in a glorying manner.

to

to Christ; yea, a suit of *sackcloth* is to a spirituall soul brave, and fine, when the Lord of glory goeth in the *same fashion*.

Object. 2 But some will object further, and say, *I do not question whether Christ loves me transcendently because of the sufferings I lye under, but rather because of the desertions in which I am*. Alas! I question whether he loveth me at all, because *he withdraweth himself from me so long: much more reason have I to question, whether he loveth me transcendently, while I see him altogether deny me his company*. Indeed in a sense, I think that the love of Christ *passeth knowledge* (for I know but little of Christ) Methinks I see him withdrawn, I will not deny but he hath sweet smiles, but I am a stranger to those smiles. Time was, when I thought hee loved me transcendently, but now I fear hee loveth me not at all, for hee deserteth me.

Answ. To such a soul as objects thus, I would say but three words.

First, *These withdrawings of Christ* (whereof thou complainest) *are but in shew, not in substance.* The *Sun* is but absent in shew, when it doth not *shine*, it is present still, though behind a *cloud*: I have often thought that Christs withdrawing, in this respect, may be called rather *his concealed presence, than his real absence*: He was close by *Mary*, although she did not *see him*; He was in the company of his *Disciples*, though *they knew it not*: His presence was not manifest (not because his *person* was not there, but) because their *eyes were held*, that they should not know him, *Luke*, 24, *v.* 16.

Note this

Secondly, *These withdrawings* (whereof thou complainest) *are not total*; Christ never so withdraweth from the beleever, but he leaveth *something behind*, he *putteth in his hand before he goeth* (as it is *Cant.* 5. *v.* 4.) And surely, his hand was never empty. *If he be absent in shining, he is present in strengthning*; though he doth not appear rich in love, yet he

Mind this

he is ſtill preſent, upholding thy life. The very breath that thou breatheſt (poor deſerted creature) doth declare that Chriſt is preſent in ſome meaſure: It were impoſſible that thou ſhouldeſt breath, if Jeſus were not within thy boſome; thy weepings after him, are demonſtrations, that in ſome meaſure he is with thee.

Thirdly, *Chriſt's departure will not be final, hee will be found again, though he be not felt now*: And when he cometh he will make rich amends for his abſence. This ſaid Mr. *Peacock* after this deſertion, *The Seais not more full of water, nor the Sun more full of light, than my heart is full of joy, the joy that I feel in my heart is incredible.* Ah ſaid another poor ſoul, (that had cryed Chriſt was gone) *He is come, he is come, he hath kiſſed me with the kiſſes of his lips, his love is better than wine, he hath not deceived me, neither will he deceive any.*

I ſhall therefore retort the Argument thus, *Though beleevers give*

Christ occasion to goe away very often, yet Christ never goeth away altogether, but even in his conceived absence, vouchsafeth a concealed presence, and at his sensible return maketh rich amends for his staying and going away: What doe these declare, but that his love is transcendent, and (as the Text saith) *passing knowledge*.

Four words I shall adde by way of Application, *viz.*

A word of { 1 *Information.* 2 *Reproof,* 3 *Exhortation.* 4 *Perswasion.*

First, for *Information*: as much as it is thus clear, that Christ loves his, with transcendent love, then it may inform us of these four things.

First, in the *deservednesse of that great, and dreadfull curse, which* Paul *denounceth against those who love not Christ*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. If any man *love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.* That is, let him be cur-

sed

ſed with the higheſt, and greateſt degree of curſing that may be poſſible; for of thoſe three degrees of curſing, which the Jews uſed in their threefold excommunication, this of *Anathema Maranatha* was the higheſt; and it includes as much as this, *Let the Lord come, and ſtrike this perſon with eternall perdition.* And tell me. do not thoſe deſervedly expoſe themſelves to this dreadfull curſe, who do not love ſuch an one as Jeſus Chriſt is; who loveth all his with a tranſcendent love? Mind this, wretches! (you who love not the Lord Jeſus) what can you ſay for your ſelves, that you ſhould not lye under this curſe? Why do not you love Jeſus Chriſt? what reaſon have you for it? Is not he *lovely, fairer than the ſons of men?* Is not he *loving?* Doth not his love to his, paſs the *love of women?* Were Chriſt unkind, you might with ſome *pretence* plead, that you have reaſon not to love him; but being ſo *kind, ſo loving* as that he open-

eth his bosome, and letteth out transcendent love to all that are his: Certainly, you may expect, and that justly, to be accursed in this high degree, for not loving Christ.

Secondly, *See here the true ground of a beleevers glory.* Is it not a ground of glory to be beloved of Christ, with such a transcendent love as you have heard? Well may beleevers make their *boast of Christ all the day long*; and well may they glory in the love that they enjoy; for why? that love is transcendent, *passing knowledge*. None of all the sonnes or daughters of men have any such just ground of glory (though they should enjoy the love of all the creatures) as beleevers have, who do enjoy only the love of Christ. For that love they have, in him, transcends, and excells, (and that infinitly) all that love which any can have from all the creatures. Let the world falsly and fondly brag of their creature-loves

loves (and pity them (Oh beleevers!) when you see them do so:) But rejoyce your selves in the mean time, *with joy exceeding great, and full of glory*: And the point will bear you out in it, for you have such a love, as is not to be found in all the world beside. Having the love of Christ, you have that love which *passeth knowledge*.

And surely, beleevers, if the men of the world think they have good ground to glory in this, that they enjoy the *Low love*, (though of some seeming *great creatures*) you have much more ground to rejoyce, who enjoy this *high love*, of him who is *indeed greater* than all the creatures (Jesus Christ). Do men think they have just ground to sit and glory, in that they sip the puddle drops of creatures loves? Have not you more ground, and that juster, and truer, to sing and glory in this, that you drink in the pure love of Jesus Christ? which is so

sweet

sweet, so excellent, and so transcendent, as that it *passeth knowledge*.

Thirdly, in as much as *Christ loveth beleevers with a transcendent love*; then see here the *rise and ground of all that which Christ doth for them*. You *wonder* beleevers (*at least you might*) and that justly; whence it is that Christ doth so much for you. One while he is *filling* you with his *unsearchable* riches: another while he is *crowning* you with *his own glory*. Now you have him giving you *choice gifts*, and anon you have him bringing of you *choyce graces*: In this duty you have him imbracing of your souls in his arms; And in that duty you find him *kissing* you with the *kisses of his lips*; and you are ready to cry out, *Whence is it that Christ doth all this for me!* One while thou art *sick*, and Christ visiteth thee, and *maketh thy bed*, and *sitteth by thy bed side* other whiles thou *goest abroad* and Christ walketh with thee, and thou *leanest* upon him, as upon thy *beloved*

loved. Now thou art in the wilderneſſe (it may be under ſome baniſhment) and Chriſt commeth to thee: And anon it may be thou art in *priſon* (under ſome reſtraint) and Chriſt viſiteth thee there too? And all this maketh thee cry out, *Whence is it, that my Lord ſhould thus come to me?* Why ſee the Point, and in that ſee the cauſe; *He loveth* thee (O beleever) and he *loved thee with a tranſcendent love*: And hence it is, that he *doth all* that he doth for thee, and *giveth* all that he beſtoweth on thee. You wonder why Chriſt ſhould ſanctifie ſuch unſanctified hearts as yours are, *& cleanſe by the waſhing of water, and by the word*, ſuch impure ſpirits as yours be: And you are ready to ſay, Whence is it *that the Lord of glory ſhould ſtoop to waſh ſuch a creature* as I am? *Whence is it that he at whoſe feet Angels fall, and bow, ſhould come & waſh the feet of ſuch a creature* as you be? Hence it is (beleevers) Chriſt hath loved you, and that with a *tranſcendent love*: Wonder

not

not therefore henceforth (unlesse it be with the wondring, why Christ doth any thing, or all things, for you) there is a reason, yea great reason (though *not in* you) yet in *himself*: It is this we have been speaking of, *i. e.* the transcendent love he beareth to you.

Fourthly, let this inform beleevers, that (*seth Christ loveth them with a transcendent love*) at all times, they *have then a just ground to act their faith upon him in any case*. Why is it (O beleever) that thou doubtest, whether Christ will do this for thee, or give that to thee, when as thou considerest he loveth thee with such a transcendent love? upon all occasions, act your faith (O ye children of faith) in your beloved: what ever it is that you *want*, and he *hath*; what ever it be that thou *wouldest have*, and he *can give*, Beleeve that Christ will not let thee goe without it; for why, he loveth thee with a transcendent love.

In

In three cases more particularly this truth will inform you of the sure ground that beleevers have to act their faith on Jesus Christ.

First, in case of *hearing of their prayers*. Surely he that so transcendently loveth their persons, will without doubt hear their prayers. Thou sayest (O beleeving soul) thou hast great necessities (and they force thee to make many prayers.) Thou sayest, that Christ can help thee at all hands (and therefore thou art *calling upon him at all times*) But thou sayest, will hee hear mee? Why shouldest thou not beleeve that he will, when thou considerest the transcendent love he beareth to thee? The love that is in his *bosome* towards thee, will *open his ears*, to hear the breathings that come from thee. Indeed, sometimes hee may *seem to be deaf*, and not hear thy prayers; and sometimes also he may *seem harsh*, and not accept of thy person: But it is to try thy faith: For notwithstanding, hee will hear thee,

These things I touched at in the first Ser. mon, but not so fully.

thee, and accept of thee, in what thou desirest *according to his will*, for *thy good*, that he may declare his transcendent love. You know Christ called the *woman of Canaan Dog*, and *seemed to speak harsh to her*; and yet even all the while that hee looked (as it were) sourly upon her, and spake (as it were) sadly against her; yet even then did his bowels roule for her, and even then was there love in his bosome to her: And therefore though (for a while) he seemed to deny, that hee might try the sincerity of her faith; yet afterwards he granted her requests, that he might declare the reality of his own love. In this case therefore you have a sure ground of faith; O beleevers, Christ will not reject your prayers, because he loveth your persons, and, the more transcendent his love is towards the one, the more sure may you be that he will hear the other.

Secondly, *In case of obtaining counsell*

counsell from Christ, and knowing the mind of Christ. This Point will inform us in a sure ground of faith, and *love.* (O beleever) *love will open Christ's bosome, and let thee see the counsels that are there:* Surely hee will counsel thee in case of doubts, because *he* loveth thee, as he doth: Thou sayest here is a Scruple, and there is a question, and I would fain know the mind of Christ concerning this or that: But how can I hope that ever he will open his mind to me, either in the one, or about the other? Why sayest thou so (O beleever?) is not his transcendent love, a good ground for the acting of thy faith, in this case? Verily because *his heart is to thee,* therefore *it will be with thee* (That I may allude to that phrase of *Judges* 16. v. 15.) However *Dalilah* said to *Sumpson, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me:* thou hast no reason to say, as she said (in such a way as she did:) Thou mayest beleeve that his

heart

heart will be with thee, because thou heareſt that he loveth thee. I would fain perſwade my own heart, and yours alſo, in theſe times of doubting, and of darkneſſe (in which wee need counſell, and would bee glad to know the Mind of Chriſt more) I would I ſay, perſwade mine own heart, and yours alſo, to this Point, to act faith upon Chriſt in this caſe, whatever the truth of ſuch a *Scripture* be (as you would know) or of ſuch a *queſtion* (as you would fain be *reſolved* in.) Sith Chriſt loveth you with a tranſcendent love, act faith in this caſe, *That in due time, hee will reveal* even the one, and the other to thee.

Thirdly, Chriſts tranſcendent love giveth a ſure ground of faith *in the caſe of raiſing up of the ſaints out of ſuffering*. Verily (O you children of faith and love) beleeve it, Jeſus Chriſt who loveth you in ſuch a tranſcendent manner (as you have heard) will not let you alwaies be under thoſe great ſufferings which

which you doe: His great love (for the preſent) maketh him *ſympathize with you* (*in all your afflictions, he is afflicted.*) Men that perſecute you, they perſecute him that loveth you: He looketh upon your ſufferings as his own. (And becauſe hee loveth you ſo tranſcendently, hee will ere long tell thoſe that perſecute you, the ſame terribly) beleeve it, Chriſt that hath appeared to you in this, ſaying, *I have loved you with an everlaſting love, and therefore with loving kindneſs* have I drawn you *out of the ſtate of ſin*, will alſo ſay unto you, *I do love you with a tranſcendent love, & therefore with the ſame loving kindneſs will I draw you out of the ſtate of ſufferings.* (I ſay) Act faith (O beleevers!) upon this ground of Chriſts *tranſcendent love*, even a ſweet, and a ſingular faith, in the caſe of delivering you out of ſufferings. As he will not *alwayes ſtrive himſelf* with you, ſo neither alwayes will he ſuffer wicked men to trample on you,

becauſe hee knoweth (and his love maketh him *afraid*) leſt your *ſpirits ſhould fail*, as under the one, ſo under the other.

Uſe. Secondly, It may be a word of *Reproof*. This point, that Chriſt loveth his with a tranſcendent love, may juſtly *reprove the world*, yea, and the *Saints themſelves alſo*.

Firſt, It may *reprove the world*, who are ready, not only to think, but to ſay (as hee in the Parable) that Chriſt is an *auſtere man*, Luke 19.21. No my brethren, Chriſt, you ſee, is not auſtere, but ſweet: As his name is, ſo is his nature, love; and that in a tranſcendent manner. Be reproved, *wretches, in entertaining unkind, or reviling thoughts of Chriſt*: You wrong him in his love, and your ſelves in the truth, while you think, or ſay, that hee is not a loving Lord; you ſhall ere long not onely ſee that hee loveth, but that hee loveth all his, with a love paſſing knowledge.

But

But ſecondly, *It reproveth the Saints alſo, who are ready very often to queſtion, if not the reality, yet the tranſcendency of Chriſts love.* Be reproved, for ſaying Chriſt loveth you not at all, or if hee doth, but very little; for you hear, that he loveth even all his with a tranſcendent love. I profeſſe it is ſadde to ſee, upon what petty poor occaſions, even beleevers themſelves are ready to queſtion (at leaſt the greatneſſe) of Chriſts love. If hee denieth them, (though but a vanity) yet becauſe their hearts are ſet upon it ſo much, they think that his heart is not ſet upon them at all, ſuch is their weakneſſe, they are ready to think that Chriſt loveth them but a little, becauſe hee doth not give them, (happily a knife, which hee ſeeth they would uſe to cut their own throat with.) Your boſomes, O beleevers, will hint you the particulars in this caſe, and therefore I paſſe them by: Onely let the word of reproof fall upon you, who for

any occasion, whether great or small, dare to question the transcendency of Christs love; when as you see it to be a clear truth (written as with a Sun-beam upon your souls and bosomes) that the love he loveth you with, is passing knowledge.

Use, Thirdly, This point is a word of *Exhortation*, to exhort beleevers (upon the consideration of this transcendent love, which Christ beareth to them) to doe at least these four things.

First, *Tremble to think that ever you should sin against him, who loveth you so much.* View thy sins (O beleever) in the light of thy Saviours love; and when thou seest the transcendency of that love which is in his bosome towards thee, then sit down, and bleed to behold thy great sinnings against him. Then indeed hath transcendent love a sweet working upon thy spirit, when as the thoughts of it can make thee mourn for thy sinnes.

How

How ſweetly did love work upon that woman (who was a *ſinner*) when ſhe taſted the tranſcendent love of her Saviour? The ſight of the great love which was in his boſome towards her, makes her ſit at his feet, and weep bitterly at the thoughts of her ſins. For the preſent, I will not diſpute the point *whether mourning for ſin before cloſing with Chriſt can bee ſincere*, Sure I am of this, that *after cloſing with Chriſt, and taſting of his love, then mourning for ſin is moſt ſweet:* And though nothing in the world melt the heart for ſinne, yet the thoughts of the love of Chriſt will. Well, beleevers, let it then have ſuch a work in your boſomes. O let his tranſcendent love (which you may read written with the *blood* of his *heart*) diſſolve thine *adamantine heart*: And let it make thee mourn for thy ſinnes greatly. *They ſhall ſee him whom they have peirced, and mourn* (ſaith the Scripture) *Zach.* 12. 10. Why (beleevers) doe you ſee him

whom you have peirced with your sinnes? Do not you mourn, especially when you see him in the light of love? I say no more but this, either you have not tasted this transcendent love of Christ, or else your spirits are very much hardened, if the sense and thoughts thereof do not cause you to mourn for sinne. Therefore let this word of Exhortation sinke deeply into your hearts (O beleevers!) weep, and weep *teares of blood*, to think that ever you should sinne against Jesus Christ, who hath writen in his own blood this truth, that he loveth you with a love *passing knowledge*.

Secondly, *Be exhorted to be ambitious to answer this transcendent love of your Saviour, with the like.* Let this love of thy Lord, be the *loadstone of thy love*; Let it constrain thee to love him transcendently, who loveth thee so. I know it is impossible that thou shouldest parallel it, (which is the glory of Christs love) yet strive at least to imitate it, (which will

will be the glory of thine.) Do not content thy ſelf to love him *little*, that loved thee *much*; Sith Chriſt hath loved thee *richly*, bee aſhamed to love him but *poorly*. Ambition in this reſpect will be a *grace*, if ſo be that the *fire* of Chriſts love to thee, ſet thee in *flames* of great love to him: O! be ambitious to declare as much as in thee lyeth, the exceeding greatneſſe of thy love to thy Lord.

Mirandula notes it as a badg of love that it maketh the *perſon willing, yea & deſirous to ſuffer for the party beloved.* Beleevers, Chriſts love to you, had ſuch a work as that, and if your love to him hath not yet riſen ſo high as to *deſire* to ſuffer for him, yet let it at leaſt riſe thus high, as to be *willing to ſuffer* any thing for him, *if hee call thee* to it; It will be a ſweet, and a ſure character of love.

As Chriſt wrote a letter of love to thee in his own blood: So do thou (upon occaſion) write a letter of love back to him, in the

same *rubrick*, *The love of Christ* (saith *Paul*) *constraineth us*, *because* (saith he) *we thus judge*, &c. 2 *Cor.* c. 5. *v.* 14. the consideration of Christs love had a *constraining power* upon *Pauls* spirit, & he could not chuse but judge this, *that if Jesus Christ dyed for him, hee should be willing to dye for Christ*. Then is a Christian sweetly exercised, when as the Golden ball of divine love, is tossed too and again, between Christs bosome, and his. Let this therefore sink into your spirits, labour to answer (O beleevers) this transcendent love of Christ towards you, *which passeth knowledge*.

Thirdly, *upon all occasions, have recourse to this transcendent love*, *Populus me sibilat*, &c. (as the miser saith) people deride mee abroad, but I comfort my selfe, when I come home, (he meant by looking into his boxes, and there seeing his gold.) Beleevers, though the world deride you abroad; yet you may have recourse to this love of Christ,

and

and comfort your ſelves when you come home: To look as it were into the glorious box (Chriſts boſome) and there ſee that, which (I am ſure to thee) is better than gold, *id eſt*, his *grace*. Weak people are thus farre wiſe, as they have their little bottles of ſpirits, and cordials to carry about with them, to refreſh them when they are faint; Beleevers, you (eſpecially you that are weak) imitate their wiſdome: Let this *bottle of Chriſts tranſcendent love*, alwayes be in thy boſome, and have recourſe to this; Refreſh thy ſpirits upon all occaſions (eſpecially when thou beginneſt to faint) and without doubt, there is a refreſhing power in this tranſcendent love of Chriſt, to keep up your hearts from fainting under troubles (as we ſhall ſee in the next point, when we come to it.) Jeſus Chriſt in his trouble had recourſe to his fathers love, why then in any trouble, have not you recourſe to Chriſts love?

Fourthly

Fourthly, (In as much as Christ loveth all his with a transcendent love) let it *be your care* (*O beleevers*) *to imitate your Saviour:* Love all his as he doth, with such a transcendent love. *Beloved, if Christ have loved us, we ought then to love one another.* At least (O beleevers) be perswaded to have *salt in your selves, and to love one another*, and that very dearly, sith Jesus Christ doth the like: *Be ye followers of Christ* (in this) *as dear children*, and be you walkers *in love one to another, as Christ hath loved you all*; who ever they bee that are beleevers, Christ loveth them very dear, because they are his: He doth so, why should not you? O that where ever you see the light of Christs love shining upon any bosome, that there you would cause your love to shine also upon the same: Especially take heed, that you do not frown upon those, on whom Christ doth smile. You have heard (and therefore mind it) that Christ loveth all his with a transcendent

Ephes. 5. 2. 1 Joh. 4. 11.

cendent love, therefore take in this *exhortation* also; *who ever they be that belong to Jesus Christ* (though in many things they differ from thee) *yet let them have thy love, for this one thing*, viz. *Christ in them*: At least learn to love them *really*, because you hear Christ loveth them *transcendently*, Christ loveth *different Saints* with the same love: sure I am, that beleevers, of all, or any opinions, are the object of Christs affection, and though they are unhappily, it may be, erring about some truths, yet they are all of them happy in the injoyment of this truth, that Jesus Christ loveth them all with a *love passing knowledge*. Sad it is to see those look strangely one upon another, who are yet all beloved of Jesus Christ: But sadder it is to see any Saint look upon another with a frowning countenance, when as Christ looketh upon him, as well as upon himself, with a smiling face. Who doth not bleed to see one beleever to write a book of revilings against

against another, when as you look upon the Gospell (as a glorious book of love) writted by Christ to them all; *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon*: O! let not *the daughters of the unbeloved triumph, to see you who are the highly beloved ones of Iesus Christ, traducing and reviling one another*. I say no more but this, sith Jesus Christ doth love al the Saints, and every believer, with a transcendent love, do you who are beleevers (and so share in the sweetnesse of this truth) do the like.

Fourthly, I shall adde but a word of *perswasion*, and let it be to perswade all *those, who as yet are strangers to Iesus Christ, to come in unto him*. O that you could behold the glorious beames of transcendent love towards all beleevers, doubtless such a sight as that, could not chuse but work upon your hearts, and strangely draw your spirits to close with him, who is so lovely in himself, and so loving unto his wandring soules, that erre

erre up and down the Wilderneſſe of the world: *Return (yee ſinners) unto holds of love, kiſſe the Son,* imbrace Jeſus Chriſt, know, hee is the Lord of love: One who imbraceth all that come to him freely; and then loveth them all tranſcendently: I fear you are ignorant of this truth, that Chriſt loveth his with a love *paſſing knowledge*.

And it may be your Ignorance of this, keepeth you from cloſing with him; But know it now, and be perſwaded to come to Chriſt; to cloſe with him, to imbrace his Goſpell, to love his truth, to be converſant in his ordinances, as knowing, if you be, you ſhall have love from him, which paſſeth knowledge. *Bee contented now to break off from the wayes of ſinne*, and *vanity*, and come into the *wayes of righteouſneſſe*; Bee contented to bid the *creature* adieu, and now be willing to *imbrace* Chriſt. do not ſay if you take up *Chriſt* in his *Goſpell* and in his *wayes*, *Friends* will

leave

leave you, and the *World* will *loath* you, and the *Devill* will stirre up the *Sonnes of Belial* against you: It matters not, though the creatures *leave* you, Christ will *imbrace* you; Though they *loath* you, Christ will *love* you. And what need you fear the rising up of the *Sonnes of Belial*, when you shall enjoy the loves of Christs bosome? *Heare and give eare, (O ye children of folly) bee wise at least* once, and you shall taste love. Christ calleth you all, whoever you bee, come to him, imbrace him cordially, and you shall find him loving you transcendently. I have said all (and happy I were, and you too) if I could but prevail with you to bee drawn to Jesus Christ with these cords of love.

However you are strangers to it now, yet if you would but come in, you should know the love of Christ, and know the truth of this point. Your own

own experience ſhould bee forced to witneſſe to this, That *Jeſus Chriſt loveth beleevers with a tranſcendent love, paſſing knowledge.*

SERMON

SERMON V.

EPHES. 3. *ver.* 19.
And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

THere is nothing of greater force to allure men, than the *desire of knowledge*; *Iob* tells us, *Vain man desireth to bee wise, though man be born like a wilde Asses colt.* Albeit it is our fate, that since the fall we are subject to folly, (*and in that sense we are vain*) yet there remaines (at least) so much *wit* in us, as to *approve of knowledge*, and to desire to be *wise*: onely here is our *misery*, that there is a great deal of

Iob. 11. 12.

vanity

vanity in our desiring knowledge; Wee are all of us apt, either to desire the knowledge of that that is *above us* (and so unattainable) or else *beneath us* (and in that respect not so much desirable.) It was this *golden apple* of knowledge, which was so taking, and tempting with our Grandmother *Eve*, that albeit the best that shee got by eating that apple, was but the *knowledge of evill*, (which wee had all been better without) yet shee was drawn to eat of the Apple: Not onely as perswaded of its being pleasant to the taste, but because it *was desirable to make one wise*: And surely, as our *Grandmother* did eat those *sowre grapes*, so we all *her children* have ever since had our *teeth set on edge* with the same desire.

Hence it is, that too too often, out of an eager desire, and affectation of knowledge, we are apt upon the one hand for to five *too high*, and to pry into those hidden secrets which God hath not revea-

led) or else on the other hand, wee are apt to stoop too low (and to dive into *niceties* and vanities, at least into the knowledge of such things in which we are not concerned) but as the Apostle doth say) I shall shew you *a more excellent way*; by declaring how you may poise your desire of knowledge, so as that you should be neither *too high*, nor *too low* in the pursuit thereof; Doe not say therefore, *who shall ascend*, to bring down Jesus Christ from above, and to reveale the knowledge of hidden glories, and unconceiveable mysteries? Neither say, *who shall descend?* to raise him up from beneath, but *remember the word* (the Scripture) *is nigh, even the Gospel which we preach*: Labour to know it, and you shal know enough, not only as to *salvation*, but even as to the *perfection* of your knowledge. Christ who is the *Wisdome of God, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdome, and knowledge*, is fully and clearly revealed in the Gos-

Gospel, and by the study and the knowledge of it, wee shall come to the knowledge of him. Now of all knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, as it is most sacred, so it is most *satisfactory*: And of all things in Christ, the *knowledge* of his *love*: And as that is most *satisfactory*, so it is most *sweet*. It is this knowledge, which the Apostle here prayeth that the Ephesians might obtain, (and by consequence that knowledge which all Christians ought to desire, and labour for.) It concerneth you not so much to know Arts and Sciences (though in themselves, and their way, they are necessary, and of worth) neither doth it concern you (at least) so much, to be acquainted with other truths of the Scriptures (which in their place are very precious) But this is that which doth so mainly concern you, *viz. That you know the love of Christ passing knowledge.*

Our third Point in order taken up, and to bee spoken to from these

words, is this, *That it is a thing of necessary concernment, for every Christian to know the transcendent love of Iesus Christ.*

We have already endeavoured to hold out, at least, a *beame of light* towards the discovery of that *bosome-love*, that is in Christ towards his: And at this time my desire is, to hint something, which may at least put you on to endeavour to make a further discovery of the riches, and the glory, and the transcendency of that love: For my designe is to make it appear, That *the study for the knowledge thereof*, is of very *choice, speciall, and necessary concernment for you all.*

Explication what knowledg we should labour for

The *subject* of the point, you see, *Is the knowledge of the love of Christ.* Now when I say, That *the knowledge of the love of Christ is of necessary concernment*

1 A clear and full.

1 I do mean, not simply the *bare beleeving* of this truth, but a *clear and full understanding of it, the substance, and circumstances thereof.*

There

There are divine, and infinite dimenſions in the love of Chriſt, and it is our duty to labour for the knowledge of all theſe: We ſhould ſtrive to be able to *meaſure* both the *length* and the *breadth*, yea and alſo to *take the height*, and to *ſound the depth* of the love of Chriſt: Chriſts boſome is a very glorious *Mine* of love, and it concerneth us to *dig* very deep into it, and not content our ſelves with a bare diſcovery of that *Golden Oare*, or *vein* of love, which is upon the *ſuperficies* or top of the ſame *Mine*; and in which we may eaſily diſcover, as it were in the very *letter* of the Goſpel; but it doth concern us to endeavour to attain unto the *deep* and *myſteriall diſcoveries thereof*, which Saints by the light of the Spirit come to attain.

2 Yea, and not only ſo, but alſo to endeavour to get an *experimentall knowledge* of this love; That as the Painter curiouſly painted love, by drawing the type of it out of his own boſome; So we in like

2 A ſpirituall and experimentall.

manner may be able by our Christian discourses to paint forth, and to declare what the love of Christ is, taking especially the grounds thereof, out of our own bosomes, our own experiences. Divines observe that the Scriptures own not any thing for knowledge (at least saving) which is not experimentall. And certainly that knowledge of the love of Christ (whereof we shall now speak) ought to be, not only a bare *head knowledge*, but especially a *heart* knowledge, an experimentall knowledge; This I thought good to adde for the explication of the subject of the Proposition.

Now for the *predicate* (or the thing that we do affirm of this knowledge of the love of Christ) you may do well, for the clearer apprehending thereof, to take it in these particulars.

First, *This knowledge is of concernment.* There are many things, the knowledge whereof may be *expedient*, but not of such *concernment*. But this

this knowledge whereof we ſpeak, is ſuch a knowledge, as not onely may be *expedient* for us to know, but alſo of *concernment* for us that wee ſhould know.

Secondly, I ſay it is of *neceſſary concernment*; ſome knowledge may bee of *accidentall concernment* to be known, which is not of *neceſſary concernment*: ſome things indeed as being accidentall to ſome greater truth, and the diſcovery thereof, are in that reſpect of concernment, to be known; (and ſo may concern a man to endeavour for the knowledge thereof) But now this knowledge hath a *neceſſity laid upon it*; and *woe* be to every ſoule that knoweth not the love of Chriſt.

Thirdly, I adde, it is of neceſſary concernment *for every Chriſtian*; ſome truths there are, which albeit they may be of neceſſary concernment for ſome perſons, who are as it were anointed with an higher anointing, and imployed in a more ſpeciall way (as officers in the

Church, &c.) may yet not bee of such necessary concernment to all: But now this knowledge, (whereof we are speaking) is of necessary concernment; for *every soule* that is named by the name of Christ, (and so *pretends to be a Christian*) but especially *every soul that is united to Jesus Christ* (and so is *indeed a Christian*) ought to labour for a solid knowledge of the love of Christ. As the *Fathers* in Christs School, are not *above* this knowledge; so neither the *babes* and children in Christs School are *beneath* it, but *all, even the one and the other*, are bound, and it lyeth upon them, as that which doth *concern* them very near, and very *necessary*, to know this love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge*.

One word I shal only adde by way of Caution; I do not speak, neither would I have you understand mee, as if this were the only knowledge to bee laboured for. Indeed it is the *sovereign*, but not the *sole* knowledge, which Christians should desire

desire, and endeavour to obtain.

In all that therefore I shall speak, I desire to be understood, not *exclusively*, shutting out other truths, but as inclusively, and eminently driving at this in a peculiar manner. And as Christ said with reference to *doing*, Those things, you ought to have done (that is especially) and not leaving the other undone (*i.e.* altogether neglect) I say in like manner of knowing, the knowledge of the love of Christ, you ought especially to labour for (as a thing of more choice, and *speciall* and *necessary concernment*) but you are not altogether to neglect the knowledge of other Gospell-truths, as if they were of no necessity, or of no necessary concernment at all.

For the *Proof* I shall not need to adde many places (it being so fully laid down in this;) Certainly this *wise Apostle Paul*, would never have so earnestly, and particularly begged

of

of God, that the Epheſians might *know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge*, if it were not of ſpeciall and neceſſary concernment for them. I ſhall only adde to this his *deſire* for the Epheſians, that *determination* of his for himſelf (which he expreſſeth to the Corinthians) *I am determined* (ſaith he) *not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*; Now the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt crucified (as I hinted once before) is the knowledge of Chriſt in his love; Though the whole life of Jeſus Chriſt, was but (as it hath been ſhewed) like one great Sermon of love, yet the death of Chriſt was as it were a longer, and clearer Sermon of love, than all his life was. Never did Chriſt ſpeak love, more fully, and more freely, than when he was as it were in that *Pulpit*, the Croſſe: Now then, if certainly *Paul* did *determine to know nothing but this*; wee may ſafely conclude, both from *his determination* for himſelf, and *his deſire*

desire for the *Ephesians*, that the *knowledge of Christs transcendent love*, (especially in a clear experimentall way) *is of necessary concernment for every Christian.*

I shall offer some reasons to make this point yet clearer.

First, *The knowledge of the love of Christ contains in it the summe of the Gospell.* (*Christ being the sum of the Gospell, and love the sum of Christ.*) God so loved the World, that hee *gave Christ*, and Christ so loved the world, that hee *gave himself*, containes in it the *marrow* and *pith* of all the Gospell: This little word *love* (written in the golden letters of free-grace upon the bosome of Jesus Christ) is an *epitomy of the Gospell*: Look as *O love the father, is the fulfilling of the Law; so Christs love to us*, is the fullnesse of the Gospell. You have *done the Law*, if you *love* God sincerely, and you *understand the Gospel*, if you know Christs love soundly.

Secondly The knowledge of Christs

Chriſts love is of neceſſary concernment, becauſe *it containeth in it the chiefeſt motive to duty*. You will never doe duty (at leaſt with that *ſweetneſſe* in your own ſpirits which you *ſhould*) and with that *acceptation* of God, which you would, if you do not act from a *principle of love*. Now the love of Chriſt known to us, is that which chiefly enflameth our love to him; what was the reaſon, that notwithſtanding that love that God ſhewed to *Iſrael*, when he *was a child, & taught him to goe, taking him by the armes*, had not that impreſſion upon *Iſrael* which it ſhould have? the Prophet hinteth the reaſon, becauſe, *Iſrael knew it not*, *Hoſ.* 11. 3. God ſhewed, but *Iſrael* did not underſtand his love; and therefore it was that *Iſrael* would not walk anſwerable thereunto. In like manner, wee ſhall never walk anſwerable by doing our duty, (*for I take duty, to be at leaſt an anſwer of love*) in caſe wee doe not know what the love is,

where

wherewithall Christ hath loved us. *Paul* was more abundant than all the rest of the Apostles were, in his labours. And surely this might be the reason, that happily hee understood more of the love of Christ, than the rest did: Hence it may be that it is, that you have that expression in the 2 *Cor.*4. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us.* The consideration of Christs love (which *Paul* came to have, by the knowledge thereof) it was as it were a whole croud or throng of Arguments, or like to a whole hedge of motives (for the word will bear both metaphors) unto *Paul*, both to dye and to suffer for Jesus Christ. There is no soul but needeth a spurre to duty, being *dull* in himself. Now the knowledge of the love of Christ, being of such speciall efficacy this way, must needs also be of necessary concernment for every Christian.

συνέχει see Luk.8.45. and Luke 19.43.

Thirdly, *Christs love is a fountain of a beleevers life*, and therefore it must needs bee of necessary concern-

cernment for a beleever to know it, in as much as he cannot live without it; verily this is life eternall to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, If it bee of necessary concernment for the soul to live, it must be also of necessary concernment to know Christs love, in as much as without the one, hee cannot enjoy the other. *I live* (saith *Paul*) but how? *by the faith* (now faith is but a higher degree of knowledge *of the love of Christ*) *of the Son of God, who loveth me.* As *Moses* pressed the *Israelites* to the sincere keeping of the Law, *for it is* (saith he) *your life*; In like manner may we presse Christians to the serious knowledge of Christs love, because it is our soules life.

Fourthly, *The knowledge of Christs love, is the foundation of a soules joy, and Christians comfort*, and therefore of such necessary concernment. The reason why the Saints are sometimes so sad, is because they doe not know the love of Christ, (at least

least in all the dimensions thereof,) Hence it is that Peace is joyned with love, sometimes in the Gospell: *Peace* (saith *Paul*) *bee to the brethren*, but from whence? from this (as it is added) *and love from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, *Ephes.* 6.23. the hearts of beleevers would be at *Peace*, if so be they did but fully understand the *love* of Christ. O (saith the soul) of that beleever, and of this beleever, indeed they live sweetly upon Christs love, because they have it, but I go sadly in the want of Christs love, because I think there is none for me: The soul is sad, because it seeth not the *fulnesse* of the love of Christ: I (saith another soul) such an one who hath *more grace* than I, and such an one who hath *lesse sinne* than I have, he may live joytully because of Christs love, but I must goe sadly because I fear hee will not love me. The reason of this soules sadnesse, is because it knoweth not the fullnesse of love, that

that is in Christ, and the freenesse thereof; without doubt, did we but know the love of Christ better than we do, wee should not be so sad, so often as we are. That *bosome Disciple* John (who knew much of the love of Jesus, and had declared the knowledge of it unto others) he saith it was for this end: *these things I write I unto you* (saith hee) *that your joy might bee full*; Sith therefore the joy and the comfort of our soules is built upon the love of Christ, as its foundation, it doth necessarily concern us, to get the knowledge thereof.

Fifthly, the knowledge of Christs love, is of necessaay concernment, because it is *the rise of Christian thankfullnesse*. Hence it is that thankfullnesse springs, it is from this fountain whence it floweth. Those soules will bee most thankfull for the love of Christ, that understand it most; *Ignorance begets ingratitude, but knowledge maketh thankfull*: Blesse the Lord O my soule, *and forget*

get not all his benefits; Men will not be thankfull for that which they do forget; neither can men remember that which they do not know: All that Christ looks for from the Saints, is this, that they should acknowledge the transcendent love he beareth unto them. Wee will never be able to sing *glory and dominion be to him, who hath loved us*, except wee know how hee loved us. Look as a Lark, at the discovery of the light of the day, ascends chirping, and chirping; and the lighter the Heavens appear, the higher she ascends, and the sweeter shee sings; In like manner the soul, who knoweth the love of Christ, and seeth the light thereof, mounteth and singeth, and the more bright the beames of Christs-bosome love shines in upon them, the higher is the soul elevated, and the sweeter it doth chirp, and chant that spirituall song of thankfulnesse unto Christ. You are bound beleevers, to thank Christ for his love, but you

will never to purpoſe go about to cancell that bond, if ſo be you doe not know the tranſcendency of that love with which hee hath bound you.

Sixtly, *Chriſts love is all the legacy he hath left Chriſtians.* Surely it is of neceſſary concernment, for Chriſtians to know that which Chriſt *left* them in his *will.* He hath not left them ample poſſeſſions, nor brave buildings in this world: (his father (though he loved him) left him not a houſe to put his own head in here) but *dear love, rich love, tranſcendent love, love paſſing knowledge,* this Chriſt hath left to beleevers (as his father left him) *as the father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you, Joh.* 15. *ver.* 9. Aske the widdow, whether it doth not neceſſarily concern her, to know that which her husband left her; Aske the child whether there lie a neceſſity upon him to know that which his father left him, both the one and the other will ſay, yes. Why beleevers, your *everlaſting father,* and your

your *soules husband*, Jesus Christ, hath left you nothing but his love, surely it is necessary that you should know it.

Seventhly, *As the soul is filled with the knowledge of the love of Christ; so it is filled with the fulnesse of God.* You empty creatures, doth it not *concern you*, (and that *necessarily*) to be filled with the divine fulnesse, the fulnesse of God? surely you will say, yes; then know, it doth as necessarily concern you to bee acqainted with the love of Christ; without that you cannot be so filled. Some have thought, that *knowledge is nothing but an union between the thing known, and the understanding*; Hence it is, that they say and conclude, that by how much any partake of knowledge, by so much they partake of fulnesse: God is love, and if the knowledge of Gods love be the union thereof with the soul, then certainly, by how much we know the one, by so much wee partake, and are filled with the

other. Observe how the Apostle therefore joyneth this in the Text, *To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge* (saith he) *that you may bee filled with all the fullnesse of God.* Every drop of this knowledge of the love of Christ, tendeth towards the filling of the soul with the fulnesse of God: surely therefore to be *filled*, and to be filled with *God*, and to bee filled with the *fulnesse of God*, yea with *all the fulnesse* of God, being so necessary for every soul as it is, and the knowledge of Christs love being so advantagious to this, It must needs bee a thing of speciall concernment for every Christian, to labour to know the love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge.*

Briefly now for application:

First, it may serve for a use of *Lamentation*, that notwithstanding the knowledge of the love of Christ is thus necessary, yet

First, that this knowledge hath been *little studied.* Secondly, though it should be much studied, yet it

can

can be little obtained.

First, I say, *it hath been but little studied.* Men have been very swift in searching after other truths, but they have been slow in searching after this. An *ample, exact discovery of this love of Christ*, may well be set down among the *desiderata, i.e.* the desirables of Divines, it having been so little handled by any. Indeed much of the *Law* (in the point of duty) hath been discovered, but little of the Gospel, (especially in this point of Christs love) hath been inquired into. I doe not know any one Authour of eminency, (indeed as yet I have met with none at all) who on purpose hath handled, or discoursed exactly concerning this subject, *viz.* the transcendency of the love of Christ; I have heard, that that precious Divine Dr. *Preston*, was wont to complain of the great defect this way: Surely it is very sad to think that the knowledge of the love of Christ, being of such

necessary and high concernment, hath been so little inquired into; *O what a gallant Gospel-designe were it, for some one who is acquainted with the Spirit in a large measure, to goe over the whole history of the Gospel, and to observe the glorious shinings of the love of Christ* to beleevers in *all*. It would bee precious if some would take it in hand, and perfect it to the purpose: But it is sad to think it hath been neglected so long.

Secondly, we may lament, not onely to think this knowledge hath been but little advanced by the labours of any, but *especially, that it is such, that after all labour it can be but little gained*. We may weep to think, how little of the love of Christ it is, that those who have most knowledge of it, doe, or can know. We read of a Book which was sealed, and *John* wept much (saith the Text) because no man was *found worthy in heaven or in earth, that was able to open the Book, or to look thereon*. Beloved, the heart of Christ may be com-

compared to a glorious Book, in which the myſterious hiſtory of his tranſcendent love is written: But alas! who is there, not onely in earth, but in heaven, that is able to open this Book, and to diſcover the myſteries thereof? Beloved, when we ſhall come to heaven, wee ſhall then be in a capacity of more perfect knowledge of the love of Chriſt: But alas! even *then* wee ſhall never be able to comprehend the love of Chriſt in the perfection thereof, that is, ſo fully as it may be known; Then indeed we ſhall apprehend it in the perfection of *our knowledge* (*i.e.*) ſo far as it can bee known by the finite knowledge of creatures; but yet then we ſhall not know it ſo full as it is. The Schoolmen ſpeak of knowledge (as they doe of ſeeing:) There is a twofold fulneſs of knowledge.

Duplex plenitudo ſcientiæ, & viſionis, viz Plenitudo 1 Subjecti. 2 Objecti.

First, *a fulneſſe in regard of the object* (*i.e.*) ſuch a fulneſs as regards the thing it ſelf.

Secondly, *a fulneſſe of knowledge in*

regard of the ſubject in which it is. Now for mine own part, I incline (at leaſt for preſent, to conclude, that although without doubt, there ſhall be a fullneſſe of knowledge of Chriſt in reſpect of *our knowledge* (*i.e.*) according to the utmoſt bounds, or extents, which our knowledge, when it is perfected to the higheſt, is capable of; yet notwithſtanding *in regard of the fulneſſe of knowledge, as it relates to the thing it ſelf*, viz. The love of Chriſt, *quoad eſſentiam, & virtutem intenſivam, & extenſivam* (*i.e.*) when it is conſidered ſo far forth as it may be had unto all the effects, and purpoſes, whereunto that knowledge doth extend it ſelf; this I ſay, I think wee ſhall not have, but to all eternity, wee ſhall be admiring and adoring of this love of Chriſt *which paſſeth knowledge.*

Wherefore then wee muſt needs lament to conſider, that although the knowledge of the love of Chriſt be of ſuch neceſſary concernment, yet

yet it hath been but *little ſearched after* by many; and when wee ſhall make the greateſt ſearch after it, we *ſhall never be able fully to attain it.*

Uſe. Secondly, it may be a uſe of *Reproof* unto thoſe who neglect this ſtudy of the knowledge of the love of Chriſt altogether. Many there are, who are *little* in the ſtudy of the *Bible*, *leſſe* in the ſtudy of the *Goſpel*, but, *leaſt of all* in this, which is the light, and luſtre, and glory of all the Goſpel, the love of Chriſt to beleevers: And I cannot chuſe but think thoſe blame-worthy, and to be reproved, who in theſe times ſpeak much of their parts and abilities in the beating out of ſome truths merely controverſall (which yet I ſpeak not againſt in its place) and yet neglect this knowledge which is of ſuch neceſſary concernment. I doe not altogether blame thoſe who ſtudy this *headſhip* of Chriſt (I mean this Government) it being I think this *preſent truth*, which is moſt controverted in theſe times; yet

yet notwithstanding, to study so far the *head* of Christ, as to neglect his *heart*, so far to mind his government, as to neglect his *love*, is, without doubt, a thing to bee reproved.

But much more are those to bee reproved, who study neither the one, nor the other, but spend all their time, their pains, and their parts, in *controversies*, and *niceties*, prying either into unrevealed *positions*, or being busied about *needlesse questions*, neglecting, in the mean time, this one necessary thing, *viz.* the knowledge of the love of Christ. How many are there that may (as one said of the Schoolmen) bee like unto Travellers, or men in a journey, who have good bread about them, but goe gnawing, and biting upon hard stones? so indeed some men, who have (at least means to have) the *bread of life, Christs love*, but they neglect it, and spend their time in gnawing upon hard trivialls, at least

leaſt not *uſefull queſtions*. Be reproved, O all ye, who ſo far ſpend your ſelves, about the obtaining of any knowledge, when in the mean time, you doe neglect the ſtudy of this knowledge, (the love of Chriſt) which is of neceſſary concernment.

Laſtly, we ſhall adde a word of *Exhortation* to ſtir up all to the ſtudy of the love of Chriſt. You who have *ſpent*, or rather *miſpent*, many a precious hour in reading of Romanſes, and fond hiſtories, of feigned loves, yea, you who ſpend all your time, though it be about ſome matters of concernment, but neglecting this; be ſtirred up now, to lay out your ſelves in the ſtudy of that which is ſweet, and neceſſary, *viz.* the ſtudy of *the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge*; you muſt conceive, that (as I hinted in the explication) my deſire is, that you would labour to be *well verſed*, and to be *exact ſtudents* in this buſineſſe; I would not have you content your ſelves

selves in some *generalls*, but labour to make *a particular discovery of the love of Christ* in its *substance*, in its *circumstances*, and in its *sundry actions*, and *declarations*: O remember, that this knowledge includeth in it all that knowledge which is necessary to be known for salvation.

When you have studied it well, you shall find that there is nothing in the whole doctrine of salvation, which is not comprehended in this love of Christ (as *Calvin* hath well observed upon the place) This knowledge is both *safe and sweet*; it is not such knowledge as wil *puffe up the head*, but it will *purifie the heart*: I doe not doubt that any can grow *wanton*, who attaineth to any *spirituall saving degree* of this knowledge. The *love of Christ will constrain to duty, and restrain from sin*; therefore betake your selves to this study above all others.

Now I shall offer something as *meanes* to help you, and as *motives* to encourage you. Onely by *way of caution*,

caution, learn to take *heed of promising your selves too much*; Doe not think that you shall ever come to *perfection of knowledge in this point*, at least while you are in this life: It is a point which may take up the study *of all the Saints*; (happily so much may bee couched in the 18 *verse* of this chapter, that you may bee able to *comprehend with all Saints*.) He speaketh, as if it were a Text, about which, not onely every Saint is to set himself, but as which doth require *all the abilities of all the Saints*. Look as some great point doth require the abilities of many Scholars (and all little enough, when joyned together) to make a good discovery thereof: such is the love of Christ, as that *all the Saints* may well spend themselves in the study of it, and when they have brought all their notes together, and added all their studies together, they will bee able to make (at least in this life) but a very little discovery thereof. Therefore take heed

heed of promiſing your ſelves perfection in this ſtudy.

Now I adde this *caution, not to deter you from the ſtudy*, but *to make you the more ſerious in it*; and alſo to *keep you from caſting of it off, after you have begun to underſtand it*. It is with ſome Saints, as with Scholars, who having ſet about ſome ſtudy, and after ſome progreſſe, find the buſineſs ſo hard, and high, as that they can never come to the perfect knowledge thereof, they begin to ſlack in their indeavours, and to caſt it off: But now beloved, conſider it beforehand, that you may not afterwards caſt off the ſtudy of the love of Chriſt, when you have ſpent your ſelves to the uttermoſt, you ſhall never come to a perfection.

Yet let me adde this, the leaſt beames of the love of Chriſt have ſo much light in them, as that they will bee very ſweet, and every peece or part of this knowledge, will be of very ſpeciall worth: yea, the low, and

and imperfect knowledge of the love of Christ (if experimentall, and spirituall) is of infinite more value, than the high and perfect knowledge of Tenne thousand things besides: Yea, and one thing more let me adde, it is possible for you to attain to a very sweet and satisfactory degree of this knowledge.

Qu. But what shall I do to attain a satisfactory degree of this knowledge of the love of Christ, so as that albeit I cannot attain to the knowledge thereof fully, yet I may be able to attain so much, as may make me (at least) say, as it is in the Text, *The love of Christ passeth knowledge?*

Answ. For that I shall offer some directions, as concerning the *means* and helps how you may obtain the knowledge of the love of Christ; And also as concerning the *manner* how wee should carry our selves in that study.

First, For the *meanes*, I shall name these

these particulars.

First, *Be much conversant in reading of the Gospel.* How ever the Bible in general, doth give testimony concerning the *person* of Jesus Christ, and also in some measure concerning his *affection* to the Saints; yet the *Gospel* (of all parts of the Bible) doth in a more *ample*, *clear*, and *satisfactory Way*, hold out the love of Christ to beleevers. That which all the Prophets spake of him, or of his love, is so *allegoricall*, and so darkly, as that it is not easie (at least for every one) to observe the light of Christs love, so clearly shining in them. Indeed the *sunshine* of Christs love is in the *firmament* of the *old Testament*, but as it is there, it is much *clouded* & much veiled. But in the Firmament of the *new Testament* it shineth in its full *brightnesse*, *luster*, and *glory*. And therefore bee most coversant in reading of it. And while you read the Gospel, be sure to carry this along with you, that all that which you shall read there, either

ther in *the life, or death of Christ, is still to be understood, as a demonstration of his love to beleevers.*

Secondly, If thou wouldest know the love of Christ, be sure to *labour to get into the bosome of Christ*; that Soul knoweth little of Christs love in the power, and sweetness, and Spirituality thereof; who knoweth only Christ in his *head*, as being without him, and is a stranger to the knowledge of Christ in his *heart*, as *being in him*. Labour therefore to have Christ *revealed in thee* (as *Paul* speaks of himself) otherwise all that knowledge which thou hast of the love of Christ, will be to little or no purpose. Look as Jesus Christ did therefore know the Father most, because (as the Scripture saith) *he lay in the Fathers bosome*. In like manner do thou labour to be in the bosome of Jesus Christ, that thou mayest the better know what is his love to beleevers.

Thirdly, *Consult with Beleevers.*

Ask those *objects of love*, concerning the love of Christ to them. They that have had experience of his love, can best inform thee. I make no question, but that a poor beleever, who hath *tasted of the love of Christ, and in some measure experienced the transcendent sweetnesse thereof*, is farre better able to helpe thee in this great study of the love of Christ, than the greatest *Scholar* in the world is, who it may bee hath read, or heard something of his love, but yet hath no experience thereof in his soul.

Fourthly, *Study thine own experiences*. Consider the carriage of Christ particularly towards thy soul. Remember how long hee bare with thee, whilst thou wast in the state of nature, I and an enemy unto him. How long did hee stand *knocking* at the door, ere thou didst open? How long did he come wooing of thy soul, ere thou didst imbrace him? How many ways did hee take to work upon thee, to open thine

thine heart to let him in, that hee might love thee? How freely did hee tender love to thy soul? was there any other condition, on which hee tendred himself to thee, than thine acceptance of him? Said he not, when he came and knocked at thy door, if thou *wilt open, I will come in and sup; and thy heart shall be at no cost to prepare, I have brought that with me that shall feast thee*? Said hee not, if thou doe but *thirst, come and drink*, and if thy heart bee but *willing, eat the good* things of my bosome, and live for ever. Thus mind those experiences of Christs acting towards thee: Remember all the Feasts of love which hee hath given thee, and by these thou wilt come to *see*, how *good*, how kind, how loving he is.

Lastly, *Adde prayer to all these*. It is the choycest wisdome to be wise in the knowledge of Christs love: *And if you lack this wisdome*, James giveth you his advice, *ask it of God*, and if you ask of God a wise heart

in this particular, doubtless he will not deny thee; *for he giveth liberally to those that ask and upbraideth no man*, Then ask of him much, Beg of him a wise and an understanding heart, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Intreat God that thou mayest be *taught of him*, to know what is the love of himself, and of his Son. As Christ saith, *Every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh to me*: So every Soul that the Father teacheth, will quickly learn to know what is the love of Christ to beleevers. And that thou mayest bee able to know the love of Christ in its *luster*, beg of God to bestow upon thee *his Spirit*. Christ hath said, *The Father will give the Spirit to him that asketh him*; And the Apostle saith, *As no man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man which is in him; so none can know the things of Christ, but the Spirit of Christ*. Go to the Lord Jesus, and remember him of his *promise*: Tell him, he hath promised to send *his Spirit*,

Spirit, and that when the Spirit is come, *he shall take of Christ, and shew it unto the Soul.* Intreat him therefore to shew his Spirit, and intreat him also, that his Spirit would come with the *shedding abroad* of his love. Say, *O! that the Spirit would take of thy love, and shed it into me; and O! that he would shed it abroad into mine heart, that I may be able with all Saints to comprehend the height, and the depth, and the length, and the breadth of the love of Christ, and that I may be able also to know that love which passeth knowledge.*

Having thus hinted a few words as concerning the means (how we may attain the knowledg of Christs love) I shall now adde a word or two concerning the *manner* how we should behave our selves in the use of this means, while we study the knowledge of Christs love; and for this take these directions.

First, *Be very exact.* Exactnes is requisite in all studies, but especially in this: Gather up (O Belee-

ver) all the *crumbs* and *filings* of this *gold* (Christs love.) When thou readest any thing concerning Christ, be exact to observe the smiles of his countenance, the words of his lips, the gesture of his hands, the turning of his eye, love doth thus observe them:

Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.

Observation was made of *eyes*, and of *hands*, and of *countenance*; so doe thou observe: be very curious to study this love in all its *circumstances*, in all its *doings*, in all its *demonstrations*: If ever you would shew exactnesse in any study, shew it in this. Doubtlesse the exacter you are in this study, the clearer you will be able to comprehend Christs love.

Secondly, *be loving*. Those know most of Christs love to them, who abound most in love to him: *John* seemeth to be most loving of all the Disciples, and therefore hee seemeth to have the greatest know-

ledge

ledge of Christs love; he was so happy as to *lean on the bosome* of the Lord Jesus; and to him was revealed more than to the rest of the Apostles. Look, as that man doth but in vain expect mercy of God, who is without mercy himself; so doth that soul in vain desire to know Christs love, who is without all love himself: you may doe well to observe the context, here in this 3 *Ephes.* 17, 18, 19. *v.* The Apostle saith, that you *Being rooted, and grounded in love, may bee able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the length, breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, &c.* To be grounded in love, is an excellent way to comprehend love: And doubtless Christ will bee very kind in the revelations of his love, to those in whom hee observes the workings of love.

Thirdly, bee very *admiring in all the study*; let all your reading bee mixed with admiration at every love-passage of Christ; *sit and meditate*

ditate at every word of love: *stay and wonder*; adore the glory of that light which appeareth in any beam of love: And in the admiration of that love which doth appear, cast thy self at the feet of Christ, and cry out, O the depth of love in thee! O the riches of the love of thy bosome! that shouldest thus let out thy self to beleevers.

Lastly, when thou comest as it were at a stand, and canst not comprehend the transcendency of this love, Imitate the Philosopher, and cast thy self into that sea of love, which thou wouldest fain fathome, or sound, and art not able; Let that love comprehend thee, which thou canst not comprehend thy self: Emerge, and drown thy self, in that vast Ocean of thy Saviours bosome, and because thou art not able with any line of thine to sound the depth, sink thy very Soul, that it may be able to taste that, which thy study will not help thee so much as to see.

I shall now adde but a word to stir you up (in the use of these *means*, and in this *manner* hinted) seriously to prosecute the sweet study of the love of Christ.

First, I might tell you, That *all the time that you spend in this study will be very delightful, and very profitable, and you will have no reason to repent thereof.* Those who have spent (or rather mis-spent) their time in reading of the fine Histories of feigned Loves, have at last been forced to confess their follies in so doing. That well-deserving person, Sir *Philip Sidney*, is reported to have lamented upon his Death-bed, the mis-spending of those parts which God had given him, in the penning of that well-penned peece, his *Arcadia*. But surely (beleevers) to lye upon a Death-bed, and to consider, that although all thy time were (every hour thereof) spent in the study of Christs love, you will bee so farre from repenting of it, as that you will have just cause to rejoyce

in

in it. But not to urge this, doe but

Secondly, *consider the times in which we live.* How little love is there in these dayes! surely, *the love of many is waxen cold*, though it bee *pressed* much, yet it is but little *practised*: Though all pretend to complain of the want of love, and seem to presse the exercise of love: Yet where is the man, that maketh it the *sweetnesse of his life*, to let others tast *the sweetnesse of his love?* Surely while there is such little love among men, it is but meet that we should study the love that is in Christ. But

Thirdly, *especially consider the sweetnesse that the knowledge of the love of Christ will bring to thy soul in any case.* Little do you know what comfort is wrapped up in the knowledge of Christs love. How oft doth but a thought of this, revive the spirits of the fainting Saints? With what a composure of spirit is a believer able to behave

have himself in any tribulation, when he knoweth, that the love of his Saviour is without knowledge? Without the knowledge of this love, nothing will bee *sweet*, but with the knowledge of this love, nothing can be *bitter*. And this is that which we shall come unto, as the last thing observed from these words, *viz.* to let you see, *how efficacious the love of Christ is unto the supporting of beleevers in any tribulation.*

SERMON

SERMON VI.

EPHES. 3. Ver. 19

And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

He that is but little skilled in the knowledge of the face of times, may very well see, that these times wherein wee live are very sad: Calamity lyeth upon every Creature; and *woe* hath (as it were) entred upon the *Stage* of the World, and *acts* a very bloudy part, to the terrour of all, even beleevers themselves; some put on black, and walk disconsolately; yea almost all the

the sonnes of men are clad in mourning, as being sensible of the misery under which most of the world at this day groans. In these times therefore what can be more suitable to our thoughts, than to consider of that which may serve to support our spirits. It is the wisdome of such as are weak, and lyable to faintings, to carry about them some cordiall or other to revive them: And it should bee (doubtlesse) the wisdome of beleevers (who are liable alwayes to tribulations) to lay in something which may keep them from fainting under these tribulations. Indeed our Lord Jesus, out of the riches of his mercy, hath prepared, and provided, rich, and glorious cordials to support the souls of his: And it is our duty (especially who are the Ministers of the Lord Jesus) to help beleevers with these cordials, which *our Lord* and *their Lord* hath prepared: And therefore while others, forgetting not onely the

the Saints, but themselves, take leave to presse and urge great things (as matters of faith) upon poor soules (as if they had *dominion over their faith.*) I shall endeavour to imitate the great Apostle *Paul*, rather to shew my *self a helper of your joy, than a Lord of your faith.* It was this indeed which *Paul* was much upon, *viz.* the furtherance of the joy, and comfort of beleevers: And it is this which he drives at in these words, in the behalf of the Ephesians; for fearing lest the newes of these troubles in which hee was, should so far trouble the Ephesians, as to make them *faint*, he therefore *boweth his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that he would be pleased to give them the knowledge of the love of Christ; that so by it, their spirits may be kept from fainting, either at the news of his, or fear of their own tribulations; This being therefore the end why *Paul* prayeth to God in the behalf of the Ephesians, *that they might*

2 Cor. 1. ult

might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, I did observe this Doctrine from it, *viz.*

That the spiritual knowledge of the transcendency of Christs love towards his, is of special efficacy to keep our hearts from fainting under any troubles.

I suppose you easily see both the *foundation*, and the *proof* of this point, in this place; yet that you may see both the clearer, let mee hint these three things.

First, consider it, *That the Apostle supposeth, that the Ephesians hearts were apt to faint at their tribulations.* At the 13 *verse*, his desire that they might not faint, doth clearly intimate this, that they were apt to faint. Indeed the *children of faith*, are not onely prone to fear, but are apt to *faint* in those fears.

Secondly, observe how upon this *fear* of the Apostle, lest they *might faint*, or (if you will) upon his *desire* that they might not *faint*, he falleth to prayer, and maketh it his *request to God*, (whose alone royalty

alty is to support the fainting spirits of all the creatures) *that he would be pleased to keep them from fainting*: For (saith hee) *for this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus*; (that is) upon this desire of mine, that you might not faint, I bow my knee to him, who alone is able to support your spirits.

Thirdly, *Consider, that among the rest of those things which he prayeth to God for, in their behalf, that they might not faint, hee prayeth for this in the Text* (as in the last place) *that they may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*

And indeed, the very *spirit*, and *strength* of all that, which the Apostle had prayed for (in the former verses, in their behalf) lyeth in this last. And happily therefore it was that hee bringeth in this as the last particular, being (as it were) that *last cordiall, which he prayed for, in their behalf, and if it had failed, hee knew not* (as it were) *what to ask of God for them*: This is, as it were, the last

laſt *Doſis* of the *Doctor*, which if it help not the *patient*, the *Doctor* is at a ſtand, and is puzled, and knoweth not what elſe to give; ſo that I ſuppoſe you may eaſily ſee, not onely the *footing* that this Text affords for this truth; but alſo a great, and *ſolid proof* of the truth thereof in it.

And yet, that you may ſee this truth more clearly from this place, I will in a word ſhew you, how that the very *ſpirits* and *ſtrength* of the other *cordialls* which hee here prayeth for, are as it were wrapped up in this, *viz. The knowledge of the love of Chriſt*. For conſider;

Firſt, hee prayeth that they *might bee ſtrengthened in the inward man by his Spirit*, verſe 16. Now what is that ſtrength of the inward man by the Spirit? but *that divine and ſpirituall joy which is through him*. The *joy of the Lord doth give ſtrength*, Nehem. 8.10. Now it is eaſie to demonſtrate, that the chief *ground* upon which the Holy Ghoſt doth *build*

that joy (which through him is in the hearts of beleevers) is this, *viz.*, *the ſhedding abroad of the love of Chriſt in them.* Chriſt having promiſed to ſend the *ſpirit as a comforter* to beleevers (he ſaith) that *he* (*i.e.*) the ſpirit) *ſhall take of mine, and ſhew unto you*, John 16. *ver.* 14, & 15. Now what is there in all Jeſus Chriſt, of ſweeter efficacy and power, which the ſpirit can take, and declare to beleevers, than the knowledge of his love, which paſſeth knowledge?

So that if the ſtrengthening of the inward man by the holy Ghoſt bee that which helps to ſupport thy ſoul from fainting: And if that working of the holy Ghoſt, bee by a creation of divine joy, or bringing of divine comfort; And that bringing of comfort in the ſpirit, depends upon revealing ſomething of the heart of Chriſt to the ſoul, then it muſt needs bee, that the ſpirit of this cordiall, lyeth in the knowledge of the love of Chriſt, which

which alone the Spirit is able to bring in, as it were from Chriſts heart, and ſhed it into the hearts of beleevers, for the ſtrengthening of the inward man.

Secondly, the Apoſtle doth pray, as a means to keep the *Epheſians* from fainting, that *Chriſt may dwel in their hearts by faith*, ver. 17. Now a very few thoughts will diſcover, that the ſtrength of this comfort doth lye in the knowledge of Chriſts love. For whereas the ſoul may ſay, ah! but will Chriſt dwell in my heart? I would fain beleeve it, but what ground have I for ſuch a beleef? Hee is the *high* and the *lofty one*, and I am *mean* and a *poor creature*; Hee is not only the *brightneſſe of his fathers glory*, but the *fulneſſe of the fathers holineſſe*; And will ſuch a pure perſon as hee is, come and dwell in ſuch a polluted houſe as I am? Thus the ſoul would, or might reaſon; but now all this reaſoning is quieted, and this doubting will bee eaſily reſol-

ved by the knowledge of Christs love; for hee that knoweth the love of Christ, knoweth how willing Christ is to come into the heart of a poor beleever, and how that daily and hourely hee doth stand at the door knocking for entrance.

So that I say, the very Spirits of the other cordials, and as it were their *quintessence*, lying in this, the knowledge of the love of Christ,

It is very plain, *That the knowledge of the love of Christ, is of speciall vertue and efficacy, to keep the hearts of beleevers from fainting under tribulations.* But I shall a little more demonstrate this point,

First, *By opening wherein this knowledge of the love of Christ doth consist.*

Secondly, *By shewing wherein the speciall efficacy of that knowledge doth appear, for the supporting of the soul, from fainting fits in the time of trouble.*

And then in the cloze of all, I shall

ſhall make ſome Uſe and Application.

For the firſt, *Wherein doth the knowledge of Chriſts love conſiſt*, or what kind of knowledge of the love of Chriſt is it, which keepeth the heart from fainting?

In the generall, I hinted it in that expreſſion, the *ſpirituall knowledge* of the love of Chriſt; That is, ſuch a knowledge of Chriſts love, as the ſoul hath by the revelation of the Spirit, acting by the ſhedding abroad of that love, even upon the ſpirit of a beleever. Look as the carnall knowledge of Chriſts perſon (*the knowledge of him after the fleſh* (as the Apoſtles phraſe is) is not ſaving, neither is it ſweet; So neither is the carnall knowledge of his love. It is the ſpirituall knowledge of his perſon, and the ſpirituall knowledge of his love, which furthereth the everlaſting happineſſe of a ſoul hereafter, and the ſweetneſſe, and comfort of a ſoul here.

But more particularly, I ſhall hint two words for the explication of the knowledge of Chriſts love, what it is.

Firſt, Negatively, *It conſiſteth not in the bare notion of it.* All divine knowledge (whatſoever it bee) is without any efficacy, if it bee but barely in the notion. Look as in *reference to duty*, knowledge is not *effectually imperative*, to put the ſoul upon doing, unleſſe it ſink deep into the ſoul (for the word falling among ſtones, and wanting root, did not ariſe up in fruit.) In like manner with *reference unto joy*, knowledge is no way *efficaciouſly reſtorative* (although it bee the knowledge of Chriſts love) unleſſe it ſink down from the head, into the hearts of beleevers. But as the Apoſtle putteth the knowledge of the glory of God the father (as to ſalvation) in this, *viz.* that *God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darknes, had ſhined into their hearts*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. In like manner hee putteth the vertue

tue of the knowledge of the love of God in making the ſoul patient in its waitings, (and by conſequence not fainting in his troubles) in this, that the Lord would direct the *Theſſalonians hearts into the love of God; the Lord* (ſaith he) *direct your hearts into the love of God*, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 5. wherefore then, this is the firſt thing by way of negation, (that you may know wherein the knowledge of the love of Chriſt doth not conſiſt) it is *not the bare notion*, or apprehenſion thereof in the head.

Secondly, and poſitively, *The right knowledge of the love of Chriſt, in reference to the matter in hand*, I conceive chiefly doth conſiſt in two things.

Firſt, *In a particular application of the love of Chriſt to the ſoul by faith*, (*i.e.*) that the ſoul ſhould be able to lay home that to himſelf, in particular, which he underſtandeth to be in the heart of Chriſt, to every beleever in generall. The ſoul ſhould bee able to ſay of the love of Chriſt, it is

mine, for else (as hee said) *quid hæc mihi, nisi mea? what is all this to me, if it bee not mine?* In like manner will the soul say, what is it to mee, if there be a transcendent love in the bosome of Christ to beleevers, if I have not a share in it? Look as the preaching of the word doth not profit them, *in whom it is not mixed with faith* (*i.e.*) (in the particular application thereof to themselves.) In like manner, neither doth the love of Christ *comfort any*, if it bee not mixed with *faith* (*i.e.*) particularly applyed to their own souls; *this is a faithfull saying* (faith Paul) *that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which I am chief*, 1 *Tim.* 1.15. Herein was the truth of the saying, that Christ *came to save sinners*, but herein was the joy and comfort of *Paul*, that hee could say, *I am chief*. It is most clear, that the knowledge of the love of Christ is comforting, but the efficacy of it doth lye in the application: Just as now, how choyce soever the cordiall bee, that

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is preſcribed by the Doctor, it is of no comfort to cure the patient, if it bee not taken; In like manner, though the knowledge of the love of Chriſt bee one of the choiſeſt cordialls which is revealed, yet it is of no vertue to the ſoul, unleſſe it bee taken (*i.e.*) particularly applyed by faith. This is the firſt thing, wherein the right knowledge of the love of Chriſt, as it is efficacious to comfort in troubles, doth conſiſt.

But ſecondly, It conſiſteth not only in the particular Application, but *in a ſerious Meditation thereof, being applyed.* Application taketh the cordiall (as it were in the mouth) and lets it down into the *ſtomach*; But *meditation ſucketh* out the ſweetneſs thereof: And therefore it is ſaid, *my Meditation on him ſhall bee ſweet, Pſal.* 104.4. Not only the knowing, and beleeving of it to bee the ſouls, but alſo the *meditation* is that which maketh it more ſweet; if the cordiall which the patient taketh, bee never ſo ſweet, yet, if it bee *ſpit out* again

again, and not *chewed* (as it were) or *ſwallowed* down, it affords but little refreſhing: In like manner, though the love of Chriſt bee ſurpaſſing ſweet (yea and albeit it bee as it were applied in the generall:) If it bee not meditated upon, it will bee but of little efficacy to keep the heart from fainting. *Wee will bee glad, and rejoyce in thee* (ſaith the Spouſe) *Cant.*1.*v.*4. yea but wherein would they find them joy? it followeth, *in thy love:* But how would they find out the ſweetneſſe of that joy, out of that love? it is hinted in this, *I will remember thy love more than wine.* The remembrance, or the meditation upon the love of Chriſt, doth greatly rejoyce the heart of a beleever, more than wine doth the heart of any carnall creature.

So that this ſhall ſuffice, as to the firſt particular, *viz.* the declaration, wherein the knowledge of the love of Chriſt, as it is efficacious to keep the heart from fainting in troubles, doth conſiſt. Now

Now in the next place wee shall shew, wherein the *efficacie of such a knowledge* as this is (of the love of Christ) *doth appear, for the supporting of fainting souls*, and this wee shall shew in two branches.

First generally: The knowledge of the love of Christ will appear, *in its effecting of five things, which are of great vertue, to bear up the heart that it faint not in any troubles*, as now,

First, in that *it freeth the soul from those doubts and fears, in which it is, about its eternall condition.* There is a great deal of vertue in such a freedome as this is, to keep up the soul from fainting in troubles; usually even those that are faithfull, when they are in any troubles, are fearfull of their eternall estate, and doe much question it: But when that fear is removed, and that great question is resolved, they are exceedingly inabled to bear up, not onely in regard of fainting under, but also cheerfully to goe through all

all their troubles. The example of that Martyr (Mr. *Glover*) is famous for this; hee much doubted his condition a little before hee suffered, and there were a great many despondencies in his Spirit, and a great many faintings (as it were) so that hee did not carry himself so cheerfully as hee would; but afterwards, when God was pleased to shine in with the assurance of his love, and to free him from this doubt, under which hee did faint, then was hee inabled, not only to bear out from fainting, but to go out, and suffer, with a great deal of joy and cheerfulnesse.

Now it is easie to shew how the love of Christ serveth to free the soul from those doubts in which it is, about its eternall condition. He that knoweth the transcendency of Christs love, will bee easily freed from doubting about his condition. The knowledge of Christs love in this respect *casteth out fear*: And indeed the chief ground of this

this doubting, is the want of the knowledge of the love of Chriſt; when once the beleever is able to ſay, I know the love of Jeſus Chriſt, and I know it not onely for others, but my ſelf, then hee will bee able to reſolve, What ſhould I doubt? Or who ſhould I fear? Sith Jeſus Chriſt loveth mee with ſuch a tranſcendent love? And thus being freed from his fears, hee is alſo freed from his faintings.

Secondly, *An aſſurance of a reward; after all ſufferings, and tribulations, this doth mightily ſupport the ſoul from fainting under them*; therefore it was, that *Moſes* did not faint (though hee were *in afflictions with the people of God*) becauſe hee was aſſured of the *recompence of reward*; Therefore it was that *Paul*, notwithſtanding his great tribulations, was kept from fainting, becauſe hee was aſſured of a *Crown of life, which was laid up for him*: Therefore it was that Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, was inabled to endure without

out fainting, because *of the joy that was set before him.* Now the knowledge of the love of Christ doth effect, and produce this assurance. The soul that knoweth how dearly Jesus Christ doth love him, and what transcendent affection hee beareth unto him, will with a little pains bee brought to beleeve, that certainly hee will fully and gloriously reward him, for all the tribulations hee endureth for him. O! saith the beleever (that knoweth the love of Jesus Christ) albeit what I *feel* before, and what I *fear* be sadder, though my tribulations bee many, yea and heavy too, yet I know I shall have a reward for all after all, because Jesus Christ loveth mee, with a love *passing knowledge.* And thus the beleever will bee sweetly supported from fainting.

Thirdly, *a full acquiescence, for rest in Christ, is very efficacious, to keep the soul from fainting under troubles.* That which causeth the heart to despond,

spond, and to bee apt to faint, is because it is apt to bee tossed up and down: An unstable soul, is like to the vessell in the storm without an *anchor*, *tossed* up and down with every *wave*, and every *wind*; therefore it is, that souls are apt to fret, and to faint, because they doe not, and cannot rest in God. Hence is that exhortation, *Psal.* 37. *v.* 7. *Rest in the Lord, fret not thy selfe.* Men do *fret*, and *faint*, because they doe not *rest in the Lord*: whereas if they could doe the one, they would bee free from the other. Now the *knowledge of the love of Christ*, doth bring the soul to such a *resting and quiescence on Christ*. O saith the beleever, when I consider how Christ loveth mee, how out of that love to mee hee will plead my cause for me, and will one day make those by whom I now suffer tribulation, to come and *worship before mee, that they may know that hee loveth mee*, Apoc. 3.9. When I consider this, saith the soul, then am I enabled quietly,

ly to rest my heart in Christ, and to solace my soul in him, and to bee so far from fainting under, or fretting at my tribulations, as that I am able in my patience to possesse my self, and to rejoyce in Christ. Thus the knowledge of the love of Christ worketh a resting upon him, and that rest keepeth from fainting.

Fourthly, *Strength of love to Jesus Christs person serveth to support the soul from fainting under tribulations.* *Jacobs* love to *Rachel* kept him from *fainting*, under any hardnesse which hee did indure for her. And the *spouse* being *sick of love to Christ*, was made strong by that sickenesse, to endure much for Christ without fainting. *The Watch-men smite her, and wound her; the keepers of the wall take her, and abuse her, taking away her veil from her*: yet shee holds out, yet shee faints not at all this trouble, and why? because shee was *sick of love* for the Lord Jesus: Thus strength of love to Christ, keep-

keepeth a soul from fainting under sorrow.

Now the knowledge of Christs love doth very *facily*, and *freely* work this: Hee that knoweth how transcendently Christ doth love him, cannot chuse but at least really love Christ again, yea, and strongly too. Beleevers cannot chuse but love him, whom they know *loved them first*. Hence it is, that (Phœnix like) gathering together all the spicy actions of Christs love, and sweetly meditating upon them, they can fetch fire out of all, and sweetly dye in the flames of that fire, and never faint. O how easily can the soul support it self from fainting under tribulations for Christ, while it burneth with love to Christ? And how easie also is it for a soul not only to fetch *fire* to kindle, but even to *inflame*? How also when it considereth the transcendent love of Christ to him.

Fifthly, Adde to this in the last

place this consideration, *that divine joy is ever efficacious to keep the soul from fainting under trouble.* There is a strengthening power in spiritual joy, to keep the souls of beleevers from fainting fits (as was hinted in the beginning.) Now the knowledge of Christs love is that which is able to produce that divine joy, and that divine joy keeping the heart from sinking under sadnesse, it is easie to gather up this conclusion, *that the knowledge of Christs love, is of speciall efficacy for keeping the soul from fainting under troubles.*

Now you have seen in a generall way, the efficacy of the knowledge of Christs love, to support the spirit from fainting in times of trouble. If you will see the summe of these five things reduced into one argument, take it thus.

If freedom from fear about a mans eternall condition; If assurance of a reward, after all tribulations; If resting upon

upon Christ in a time of trouble; *If strength of love to Christ, and also of divine joy through the Spirit, be efficacious to keep the heart from fainting under troubles, then the knowledge of the love of Christ, must needs be efficacious, because it produceth all these.*

But now we have seen that freedom of the soul, 1 *From doubts, about the eternall condition,* *And* 2 *assurance of a reward after all tribulations,* *And* 3 *an acquiescence or resting on Christ in time of trouble, together with* 4 *strength of love to Christ,* *And* 5 *divine joy, is ever efficacious that way,* therefore, &c.

But now more particularly, I shall shew the *efficacy of this cordiall* (the knowledge of this love) *to keep the heart from fainting* under troubles, in these four things.

First, *In that the knowledge of the love of Christ, doth (especially in such a nature as hath been described) go to the heart, and refresheth the Spirits of a beleever.* Therefore is any thing cordiall, and refreshing, because it

goeth to the heart, and hath a power on the Spirits. As now *wine, hot water, Spirits* and *quinteſsences, &c.* doe therefore cheriſh, becauſe they warm the heart, and revive the Spirits: Thus now the *knowledge of the love of Chriſt, becauſe it goeth to the very heart*, and reviveth the Spirits of the Saints (which if revived there is no fainting) therefore it muſt needs bee ſo efficacious as it is. As now the *fear of God* is moſt ſoveraign to keep from evill, becauſe (as the phraſe is) it is put into *the heart*; ſo likewiſe the knowledge of the love of Chriſt is moſt ſoveraign, and efficacious to ſupport from fainting under trouble, becauſe it goeth to the heart, and cheareth the Spirits. Hence is that phraſe, *of the ſhedding abroad the love of God in your hearts.*

Secondly, This knowledge of the love of Chriſt doth appear to bee efficacious to keep from fainting under troubles, in that it maketh *the faculties of the ſoul*

ſo

ſo intenſe. Intenſion maketh inſenſible, and ſo freeth from fainting. *Saul*, though hee were oppoſed, and much mocked of the ſonnes of *Belial*, yet being newly lifted up to the kingdome (was ſo *intenſe* upon that) that hee did not at all mind the ſonnes of *Belial* (much leſſe did hee faint at their ſordid carriage.) Some conceive that *therefore* men in a frenzie doe not faint at any thing (as others doe) becauſe of their intenſiveneſſe; what was it that kept the Apoſtle from fainting in affliction, but the *intenſiveneſſe* of his Spirit, about everlaſting and eternall objects, *For which cauſe* (ſaith he) *I doe not faint, while wee look not at things which are ſeen, but things which are not ſeen*, 2 *Cor*. 4.c. 16, 18. *Paul* was ſo *intenſe* upon higher objects, that hee did not faint at his tribulations. Now the knowledge of the love of Chriſt, maketh the ſoul very *intenſive* in the contemplations of all its ſweet dimenſions. Thus ſaith the ſoul that knoweth

1 Sam. 10. 27.

the love of Christ, *O the height, and depth, and length of the love of Christ! O that so great a person as Christ is, should love so mean a creature as I am! Oh that one who is not onely man, but God, should set his heart upon mee, who am not onely a man, but a worm!* And thus now being intense in that contemplation of Christs love, it is kept from fainting under tribulations.

Thirdly, it appeareth, that the knowledge of Christs love is efficacious &c. because *it maketh the soul to forget all the loves of men.* The reason why we are apt to faint under tribulations, is because wee are apt to overprize the love of men. Did wee not set our hearts so much on the love of men, wee should not faint for the want of that love. What though men (yea all the sons of men) shall hate and oppose? so long as I doe not prize their love, nor fear their hatred, I shall never faint. Now the contemplation of the love of Christ to the soul, doth work

work this effect upon the heart, It maketh a man to forget all love of men. *Peter* forgat the earth when hee saw but a glimpse of glory in the Mount. Mans glory is not seen, when Christs glory doth appear; the light of the Stars is not seen, when the light of the Sun doth shine. And while the soul is taken up in the meditation of the love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge*, hee doth not mind the loves of men, and therefore hee is free from fainting, at the want of them.

Fourthly, and lastly, the efficacy of the knowledge of Christs love &c. will appear, in that *it hath a power to make a man forget all those tribulations which hee lieth under*; we give wine (saith King *Lemuel*) *to them that be of heavy hearts; & strong drink to him that is ready to perish*, Prov. 30. 6. *let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.* A soul that can make application, and meditation of the love of Christ, drinketh as it were that

wine, that maketh him *forget* his ſorrows, and remember his troubles no more. Hence it is you ſhall haye the poor beleever ſay, I was ſo taken up with the remembrance of the love of Chriſt, that I forgot I was in priſon: As *Paul*, when hee wrot this Epiſtle (being a priſoner at *Rome*) yet was ſo taken up with the love of Chriſt, as forgetting in a manner his impriſonment, *he prayeth not for himſelf, leſt hee ſhould faint at tribulations, but hee powreth out his heart that way in the behalf of the Epheſians, that they might not.* So that there is a divine, ſpirituall, *intoxicating power in the love of Chriſt*, to cauſe a man not to mind, or to remember the tribulations under which hee lyeth; and ſurely the ſoul doth never faint under that which it doth forget.

Note this.

Thus now wee have gone over the ſecond thing, and ſhewed you both generally, and particularly, wherein the power of the knowledge of the love of Chriſt (as it helps

in

in keeping the heart from fainting under troubles) doth conſiſt; wee will wind up all in a word of Application; Now

Uſe firſt, for *Information.* This point(*That the knowledge of Chriſts love is of ſuch ſpeciall efficacy to keep up the heart from fainting under troubles*)lets us *ſee what great need we have to ſtudy the love of Chriſt.* Men have much ſtudied the nature of ſome *Plants* and *Mineralls*, becauſe they are of ſpecial uſe for *cordials*; you hear of what ſpeciall uſe for ſpirituall cordialls, the knowledge of the love of Chriſt is; have not you ground then to ſtudy it? *Paracelſus* concluding all to lye within the compaſſe of his *Sol*, *Sulphur*, and *Mercury*, ſpent all (or moſt of) his ſtudy, in the ſearch, and knowledge of them; The love of Chriſt is the moſt *catholicall cordiall*; not onely including all other cordialls, but the life that the ſoul doth find in all other; Look as Gods love is put for all cauſes, *Joh.*3.16. when hee gave

gave his Son. So Christs love is put for all cordialls, when the Saints get comfort: *Tribulation, distresse, persecution, famin, nakednesse, perils, sword*, neither any, nor all these, can bear down, when the soul knoweth the love of Christ that loves him. And as it is the most *Catholicall cordiall*, so it is the most *Homogenall*. Those cordialls are of most efficacy, which are most naturall, and most suiting to the Spirits; why, *love is our life*, Gal. 2. 20. Christs love falls in with the life of a Christian, it is most suitable to it, and therefore most sovereign. Verily if there bee need of studying that which may bee a cordiall to any condition, there is necessity of studying of the love of Christ, which is such a *Catholicall*, and *Homogeneal* cordiall as it doth suit with the Spirits, and as it fitteth all the troubles, that any believer may meet withall.

Secondly, this Doctrine speaketh *lamentation* also: How sad is it to see!

see! that though this love of Christ bee such a cordiall to beleevers in any trouble, yet either,

First, *they neglect it*, and make no use of it, such is their folly, that they have this *precious price in their hands*, and they doe not know it, so as to make use of it; what a sad thing is it, for the fainting man, to see a cordiall at the beds head, and not to use it?

Secondly, instead of using this, *they use other cordials*. Who laments not? to see beleevers in these times of trouble, one while *eying counsells*, another while *eying Armies*; and in the mean while, not *eying the love of Christ* (which alone is able to comfort, when all other things fail.) It is lamentable to see how beleevers leave this *fountain of living comforts, and seek after*, yea and *dig for cisternes*, yea *broken cisternes*, that neither have, nor can hold any comfort in them.

Thirdly (which is worst of all) *when Christ offers this cordial, they put it*

by,

by, and will not take it. How often doth Christ open his bosome to the beleever? and lets him see love written in the golden letters of *Free grace*; and beseecheth the beleever to look, and live, to contemplate it, and to take comfort from it. How often doth Christ say, Soul, I love thee, I love thee *with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee* into this wilderness of trouble, that here I might speak comfort unto thee, where none can help thee? And yet lamentable it is to hear beleevers saying, that they will not beleeve it, though their souls might bee comforted by it.

Thus beleevers, this *cordiall point* may set you all a weeping, that notwithstanding the love of Christ bee so comfortable, you *use it not, but instead thereof use other cordialls*: That when Christ openeth this cordiall, you will not open your mouths widely that hee may fill them with it.

Use

Uſe, Thirdly be *reproved you children of faith for this fault.* Hath Chriſt provided ſuch a cordiall for you, and do you neglect it? Is there ſuch refreſhing for your ſouls in his love, and will not you uſe it? Doth hee (as it were) bring it home to your hearts, and will not you take it? *be reproved for your folly* (O yee of little faith) ſuppoſe the Mother ſhould provide ſome cordiall for the weak, fainting child, and bring it to the child, beſeeching the little one to take it, that it might live; were not the child much to bee reproved, if (forgetting all the Mothers care and coſt) it ſhould put it by? It is your folly, and your blame (O beleevers) who notwithſtanding all the *care* (yea and the *coſt* of Chriſt too) in preparing, and bringing this *cordiall* (*his love*) unto you, yet too too often you put it by, and *Rachel*-like, becauſe your *children* (*creature comforts*) are not, you will not bee comforted with this cordiall

of

of Christs love.

Use, Fourthly, let it bee a use of *direction, to direct beleevers whither to go for a cordiall in time of trouble.* What *have you to doe with the waters of Sehor?* Run you to the bolome of your Saviour; why doe you spend your selves to goe after the pudled streams of creature sweetnesse? goe you to the running river of your Lords love, drink thereof, and bee refreshed, and bee comforted in any case.

Object. *I saith some soul, I would goe thither* (as being indeed in a sad case, needing comfort) *but how shall I doe to draw out the water of life*, that is in Christs love?

Rep. Why what is thy case poor heart? what is thy case in which thou needest comfort? and for which thou wouldest goe to Christs love?

Answ. My case is spirituall, my soul *is troubled within: I see much sin but little grace*, and this goeth to my heart, filling it with trouble; how shall

ſhall I improve Chriſt love in this caſe for a cordiall?

Anſw. For that (beleever) know, *Chriſt loveth thee notwithſtanding all this.* I beeleeve you think that Chriſt doth not affect you, becauſe your ſinne is ſo much, and your grace is ſo little. Know ſoul, though the woman was a *ſinner* (in the City, and ſo full of ſin) yet Chriſts love paſſed by her ſin, and pardoned her: Chriſts love took the advantage of her many ſins, to ſhew much love to her ſoul. And it is his cuſtome, *where ſins abound, there to make love ſuperabound.* Therefore thou maiſt comfort thy ſelf (O ſad ſoul) with the thoughts of Chriſts love. This love made him to ſuffer for ſin, and this love maketh him every day to pardon ſin: yea and hee will ſhew the tranſcendency of his love, in paſſing by the tranſcendency of ſin.

Object. *O but I have not only much ſin, but little grace!*

A. Bee it ſo (O beleever) yet the love

love of Christ may comfort thee notwithstanding it. *Thou thinkest that grace is the cause of love, but thou art deceived, it is the effect of love*; Christ loveth not because there is grace; but because hee loveth, hee giveth grace. Grace is given in a time of love; Love is not shewn because of grace; therefore comfort thy self (O beleeving soul) at the consideration of the transcendency of Christs love. It is the glory thereof, that it *pardoneth much sin*, and that it *loveth little grace*; and it will work so, that in time *sin shall bee little*, and *grace much*.

Ob. O but saith the poor soul, *I have lost Christ*. I think there was a day, in which I saw, that his love was my life, and the consideration thereof was my comfort; but I have lost the one, and so cannot solace my self in the other.

A. Why *yes* (*beleever*) *the consideration of Christs love, may bee a choice cordiall here*. Didst thou consider the *very nature* of Christs love aright, thou

thou wilt know this to bee the glory thereof, that *once had, it can never bee loſt*. It may bee the Sun may bee in a cloud, and thou not ſee it, but it will appear again: But the Sun ſhall ſooner leave the Firmament, than Chriſts love ſhall leave thee: Didſt thou but alſo *conſider the tranſcendency of Chriſts love*, thou wouldeſt know, that though Chriſt ſeemeth to withdraw himſelf a while, yet his love will not permit his withdrawing to bee long; *yet a little while, and you ſhall not ſee mee*: (It is but a little while that Chriſt is ſeemingly loſt) *and yet a little while, and you ſhall ſee mee again*. Chriſt knoweth your Spirits would faile, if hee ſhould bee long away: Love therefore looks to it, that it ſhall never bee ſo long, as in the loſſe thereof thou ſhouldeſt faint, and dye. Didſt thou know the tranſcendent nature of Chriſts love, thou wouldeſt know this, that though thou mayeſt faint a little, yet thou ſhalt not dye: Love will

come and revive thee; yea didst thou but consider the love of Christ aright, it will bee a cordial in other particulars also, in that it maketh a large amends for a little tarrying; for a *moments* withdrawing, it lets out *everlasting kindnesse*, and it therefore departed for a season, that thou mightest have it for ever

O.b. O but saith the soul, I faint to *think that I have lost Christ through mine own defect*: I have been so base as to drive him out of my bosome; and I faint to think that hee will never come again.

A. Why (poor soul) *thou art ignorant of the nature of Christs transcendent love*: Couldest thou but know it, thou wouldest easily resolve thy soul in this case, and support it with a sweet cordial: such is the *nature* of transcendent love, that *though you have been foolish to drive Christ away, yet it is so powerfull to bring Christ again.* It was the folly and the fault of the spouse, that though

though her beloved was knocking at her door, till his *locks were wet with the dew of the night*, yet ſhe ſluggiſhly lay in her bed, and would not let him in: Indeed *hee went away*, that ſhee might ſee her folly, but hee *came again*, that hee might ſhew loves tranſcendency.

Ob. Nay ſaith the ſoul, with all this, *I have violated and wronged conjugall love*; and the thoughts of theſe ſink my Spirit: I faint and dye to think of this, for fear that Chriſt will not paſſe by theſe.

Anſw. Still I ſay (*beleever*) *didſt thou but know the nature of the tranſcendent love of Chriſt*, it would afford thee a cordial in this caſe alſo: This is the glory of this love, that it paſſeth by ſuch violations. Indeed the love of men will not, but the love of Chriſt will paſſe by this foul tranſgreſſion, becauſe that Chriſts love tranſcendeth mens love. *Thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet return to mee*, Jerem. 3. *ver.* 1. and ſurely (ſaith hee) *as a wife*

treacherously departeth from her husband, so have you dealt with mee, O house of Israel, yet return you back-sliding people, and I will heal your back-slidings: O transcendent love! which is in Christs bosome, which knoweth how to pardon the defilement of the bed of love. Indeed there is no failing so great, but didst thou know the transcendency of Christs love, thou wouldest see it to be greater, than any failing of thine can conquer, so that now in case this fear should bee able to disturbe thy comfort, and to make thee faint, yet the consideration of Christs love may support thy soul, and bee a cordial unto thee, even in this case.

Object. But yet I hear others cry out, and say, *how shall wee doe to draw out joy, out of this well of salvation.* How shall wee make the consideration of Christs love, a cordial to us in our troubles?

Quest. Why? *what are your troubles* (poor souls) which make you stand

ſtand in need of the comfort of this conſideration?

Anſw. I have *loſt much, nay all, for Chriſt*, becauſe I ſtood to his cauſe; I have loſt all the creatures, lands, and livings too, yea, and houſe, and houſhold too, &c. I have loſt all.

Anſw. But yet conſider Chriſts love, and it will comfort thee in the middeſt of this loſſe: *It is the nature of tranſcendent love, to repair all loſſes, & that double; in your land*, you ſhall poſſeſs *double Iſa.*61.17. And *there is no man that hath left for Chriſt Parents, Brethren, houſe, or children, but love will make up all that*, as *Luke* 18.*ver.*29. Tranſcendent love, ſcorns to let any bee a loſer by it. May not this comfort thee?

Ob. O but ſaith another, I have not onely loſt all, but am *ſtill oppoſed*; they have ſtripped mee to my change for Chriſts ſake, and yet *oppoſe my very skin*: How ſhall I comfort my ſelf with the conſideration of Chriſts love now?

A. Why thus (poor soul) consider, *Christ will comfort as fast as men oppose*; transcendent love giveth the soul answerable consolation to any tribulation in which the soul can bee. *In the world you shall have tribulation* (saith Christ) *but bee of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and in mee you shall have peace.* Transcendent love giveth a *smile* for every *frown*, a *kisse* for every *buffet*, an *imbrace* for every *blow*; this is the nature thereof, consider it, and bee of good comfort.

Ob. O but saith the soul I have not onely lost all, and been stripped to the change, but am brought to *the stake*, how shall I fetch comfort out of Christs love now?

A. Consider thou (dying soul) Christs love hath provided a comfort for it; It saith, you *shall have your life by thus losing* of it; You are in the way to secure your life; by this you shall *not dye, but live*; thus saith transcendent love, *because I live, you shall live also*,

Joh.

Joh. 14. *v.* 19. After one blaſt, into Chriſts boſome; It is but a wink with the eye, and into the land of the living preſently.

Thus you ſee whither to goe for comfort in any tribulation, *viz.* to Chriſts boſome, and there you may find in his love, a cordial ſuitable to any tribulations, whether within, or without, ſpirituall or corporal: Be directed therefore upon all occaſions, O you beleevers, to run to Chriſts love, and to comfort your ſelves in the conſideration thereof.

Uſe, Fifthly, it may bee an uſe of *Terror to Chriſtleſſe creatures*: you hear the conſideration of Chriſts love is a cordial, able to ſupport in any trouble; but *wretches that you are, you* have no right to it; *tribulation is for every ſoul that ſinneth*, Rom. 2.9. you will meet with tribulation, *Chriſtleſſe creatures*; ere long, divine wrath will come and viſit you ſurely; *and what wil you doe in the day of the viſitation thereof?* Whither

wil you runne for consolation in the hour of your trouble? Will you runne to men, alas! *miserable comforters* will they bee, and so thou wilt find them to bee: *Men of a high degree are vanity, and men of a low degree are a lye.* Whither will you go in the anguish of your souls for a drop of sweetnesse? Will you goe to duties? alas, without Christ they are but dry! and you that are Christlesse, will not know how to manage duties, so as to suck comfort through them. Wil you say you are in Christ? the Scriptures will confute you; you are told, *but if any bee in Christ, hee is a new creature*, 2 Cor. 5.17. Do not say, I am *baptised*; Many are *baptised into Christs name*, who are not *baptised into his person*; you will say, you have heard him *preaching in your streets*, that you have *eat* in his *presence* (been as you say, at the Sacrament) alas poor creatures! all this may bee, and yet you have no right to Christ. Tremble therefore you Christlesse creatures,

tures, his love is the cordial in trouble, the conſideration thereof may ſupport the ſoul from ſinking in any tribulation; but woe to you! woe to you! you have no part in that; what will you doe? what will become of you when Chriſt ſhall appear in wrath? It will bee in vain for you to call to the mountains, to hide you from the wrath of the Lamb: It will bee in vain for you to think upon the creatures, nothing, nothing, will bee able to ſupport *your ſouls. Indeed, beleevers* (when hee ſhall appear in *flames of fire*) will bee able to comfort themſelves, with the knowledge of his tranſcendent love; but alas, you who have no right to Chriſt, what will you doe in that day? you muſt doubtleſſe (if you remain as you are) ſink in deſpair, and dye under his wrath.

Uſe, Laſtly, I ſhall adde one *word of exhortation*, and conclude: In as much as the knowledge of the love of Chriſt is of ſuch ſpeciall efficacy

ficacy (as you have heard) to support your souls under tribulations, then bee exhorted.

First, to *labour to be well acquainted with the love of Christ in the substance thereof, in the circumstances thereof, and especially in the fulnesse and freenesse thereof.* Read, study, pray, doe what you can, that you may bee acquainted with this love; the knowledge, and consideration of which, is a cordial in any trouble.

Secondly, *labour to clear it up to your selves, that you have a share in this love, and a right to it.* This is the cordial of this cordial of Christs love, *viz.* for the soul to see that it is this; so much I hinted in the explication thereof: Especially strive (poor souls) to clear up this; know, you once had no part in it, you were born *children of wrath, without Christ*; Let it bee your constant care therefore to make it appear, that now you have a share in that transcendent love which is in Christ.

Thirdly, *upon all occasions run to this*

this fountain of love. Draw out of it ſuitable Cordials for any troubles. You have heard that it will comfort (and a word was hinted to direct you.) Now, *up, and bee doing*; and in all occaſions, labour that the love of Chriſt may keep your Spirits from fainting.

Conſider what times you are fallen in, you may expect to meet with tribulation. I cannot aſſure you, of ſweet, and loving dealing from the world; neither can I aſſure you of kind dealing from thoſe who call themſelves by the name of Brethren: But this I can aſſure you, *If upon the words of grace you act faith, and come to Chriſt*, that hee will ſweeten your troubles.

You have heard, *There is love in his boſome for every beleever, and that love is of a tranſcendent nature.*

You have alſo heard how that,

that, *It concerneth you all to labour, and ſtudy for the knowledge of it*: And now you hear, *That if you attain the right and ſpirituall knowledge thereof, it will bee very comfortable to you in any trouble.*

I beſeech you therefore, as you prize your ſoules, as you prize comfort in tribulations, Beleeve, and labour to get a part in Chriſt; and then know, that let your condition bee what it will bee, however the World ſhall goe well or ill with you, yet you ſhall ſtill find a Friend of Chriſt, hee will ſtill follow you, with a *full*, a *free*, a *cordial*, and a *tranſcendent love.*

I have no more but this: Let the conſideration of the love that is in Chriſt to Beleevers, and of all the comfort that is in that love in any troubles, prevaile with you to look after it, and

to lay hold upon Jeſus Chriſt,
Then ſhall you know experimentally
That the love of Chriſt paſſeth know-
ledge.

FINIS.

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